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JUNE 2000

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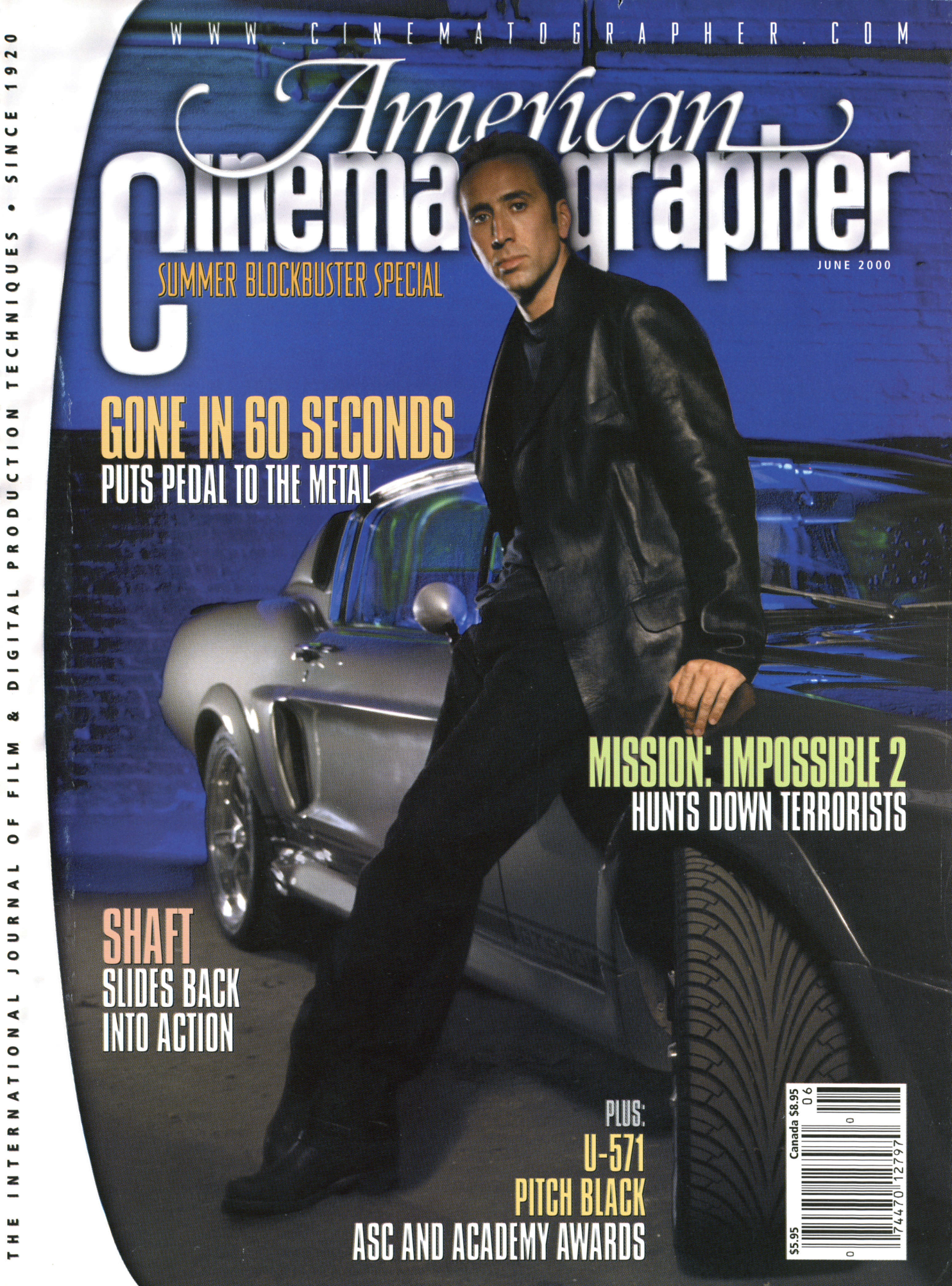

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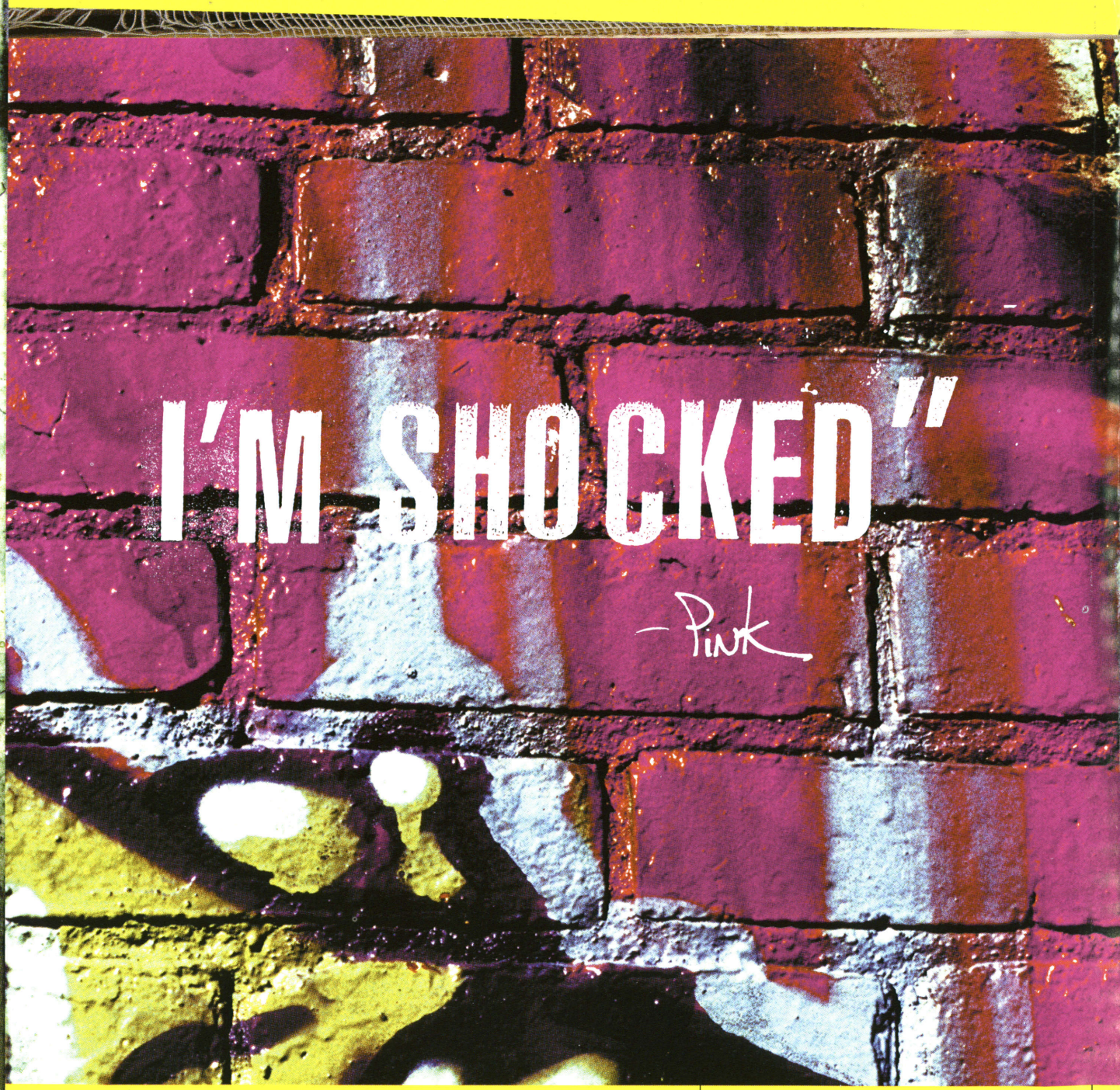

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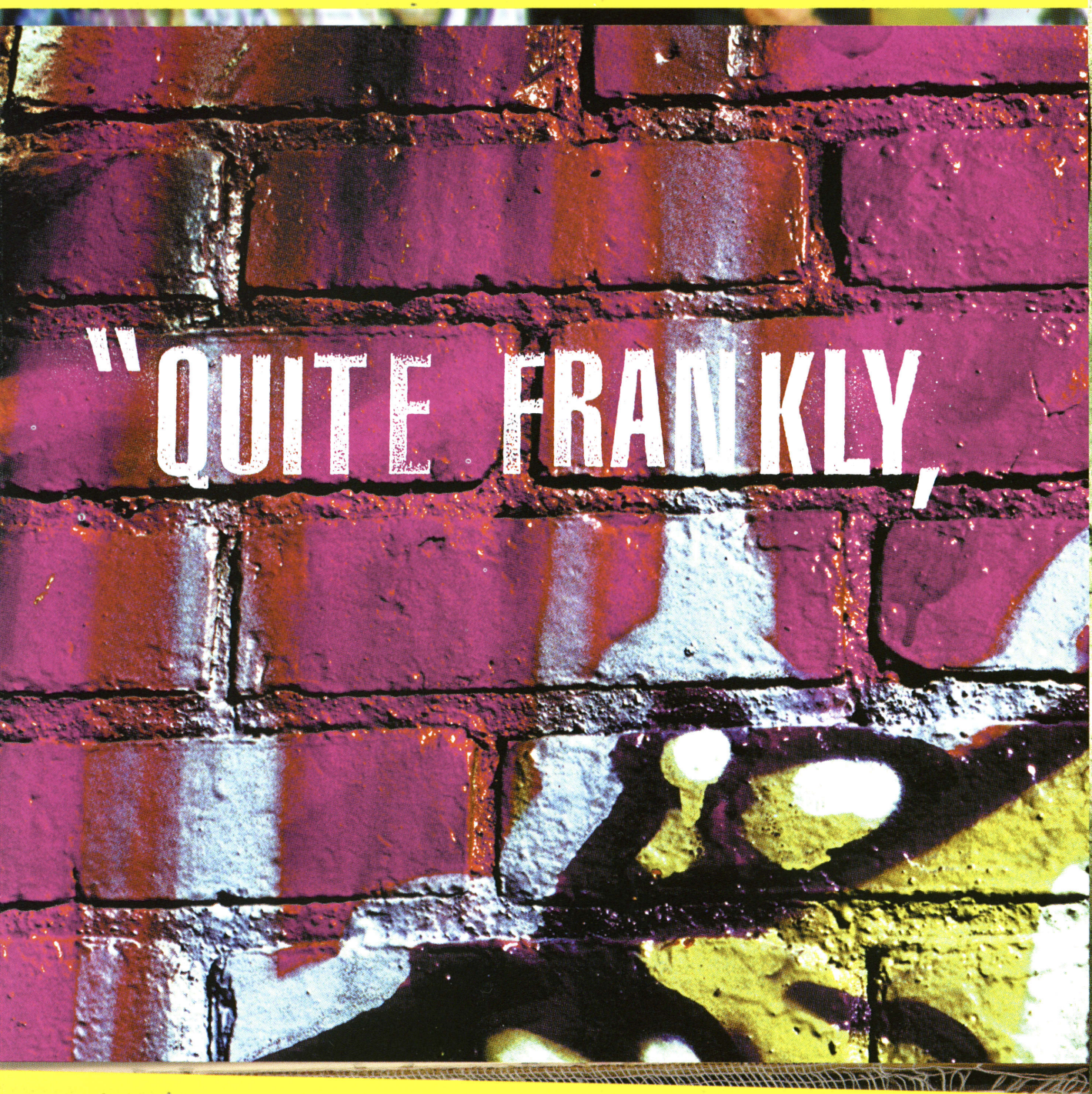

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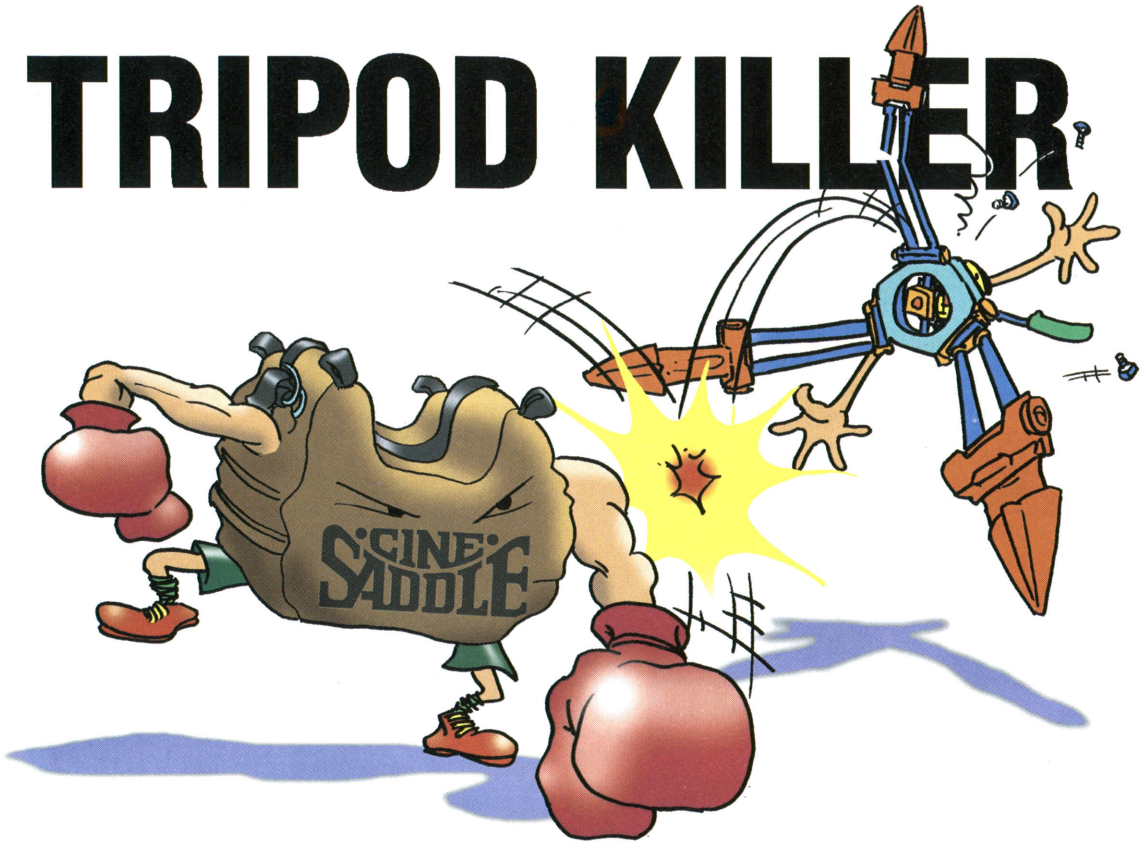

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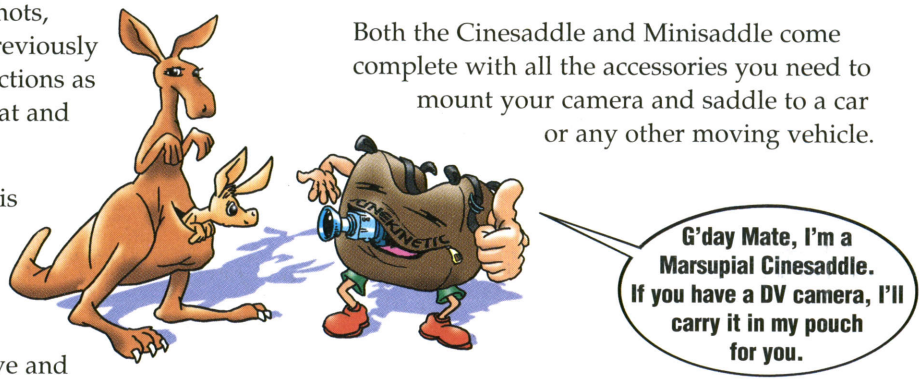

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"The secret of good filmmaking is to make it seem spontaneous. That takes preparation, but you have to be spontaneous and trust your instincts. Cinematography is most fulfilling when you are collaborating with a director to create a visual reality that expresses an emotional experience. When students ask where the look for *Saturday Night Fever* came from, I say it came from necessity. We wanted to transform the disco into something magical. I thought we needed lots of reds, because that sent a subliminal message. In *Coal Miner's Daughter*, we wanted the audience to feel like they could smell the coal burning in stoves. We created colder images that were as tactical as possible. It is always an adventure. There are new technologies, aesthetic tastes change, and there are infinite sources of inspiration. It is all around you. You just have to see it."

Ralf Bode's credits include *Saturday Night Fever*, *Coal Miner's Daughter* (Oscar® nomination), *Gorky Park*, *Dressed to Kill*, *The Accused*, *Cousins*, *Don Juan De Marco*, *Raggedy Man*, *Balanchine's The Nutcracker* and next up is *Boys and Girls*. His telefilms include *Cinderella*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Gypsy* (Emmy® nomination) and *Annie*.

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The International Journal of Film & Digital Production Techniques

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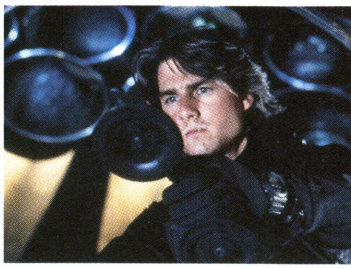

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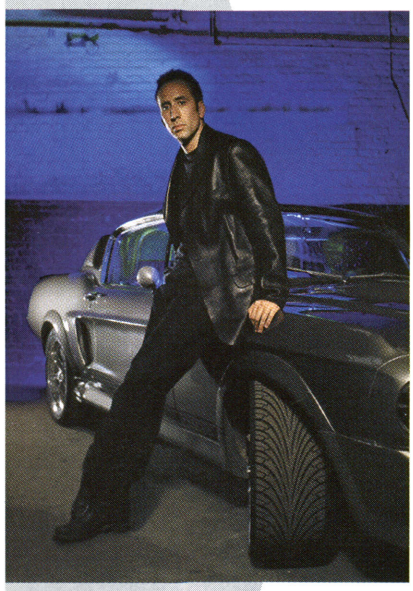

On Our Cover: Nicolas Cage plays veteran car thief Randall "Memphis" Raines in *Gone in 60 Seconds*, a high-octane thriller directed by Dominic Sena and photographed by Paul Cameron (photo by Albert Watson, courtesy of Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer).

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Mark Dillon
David Heuring
Jay Holben
Patricia Thomson

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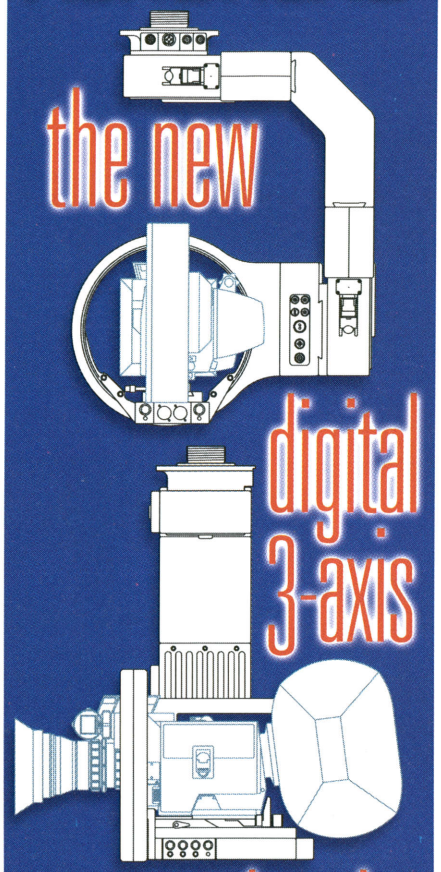
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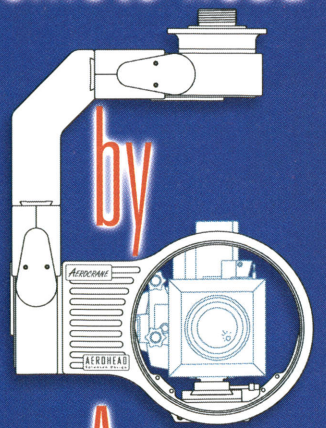
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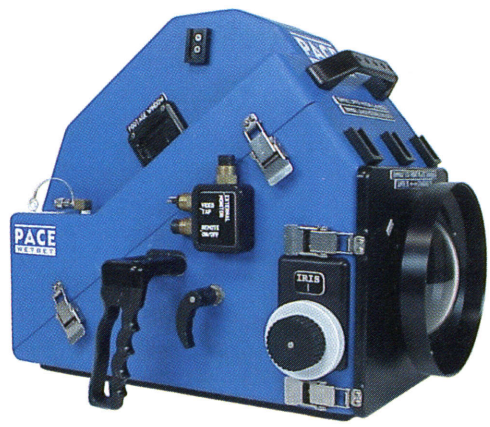

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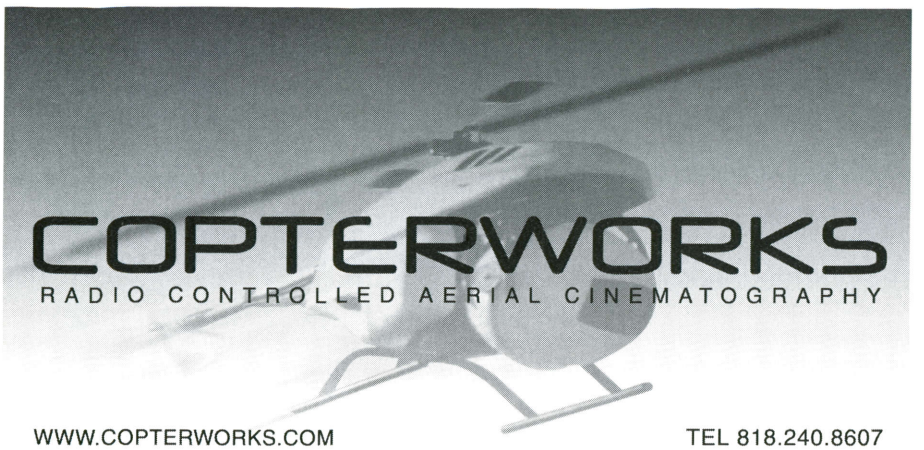

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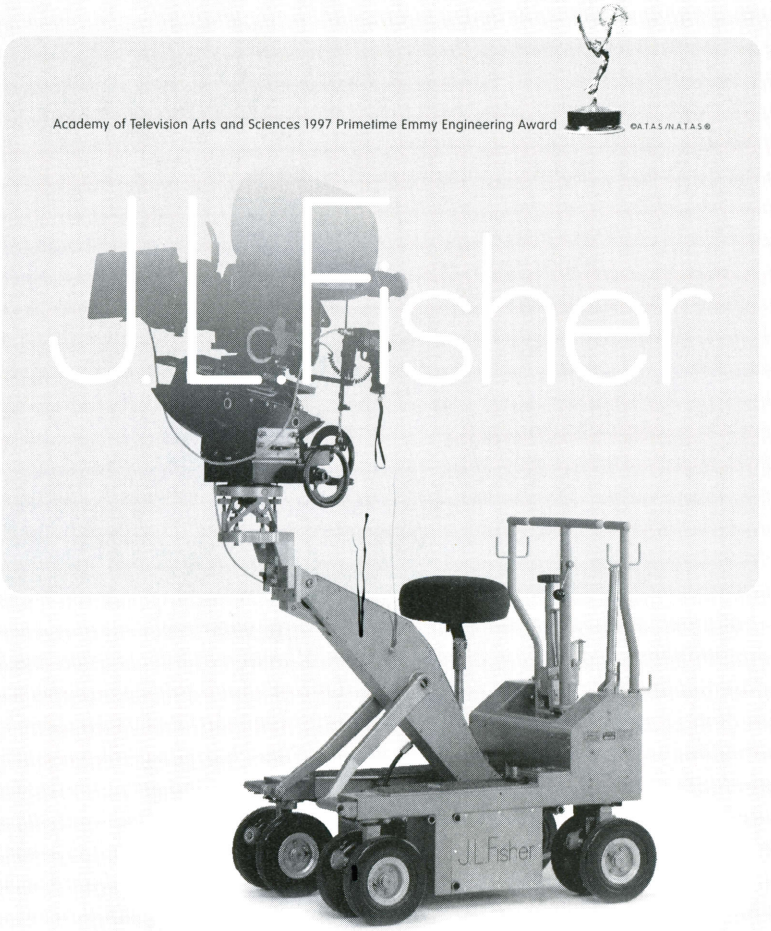

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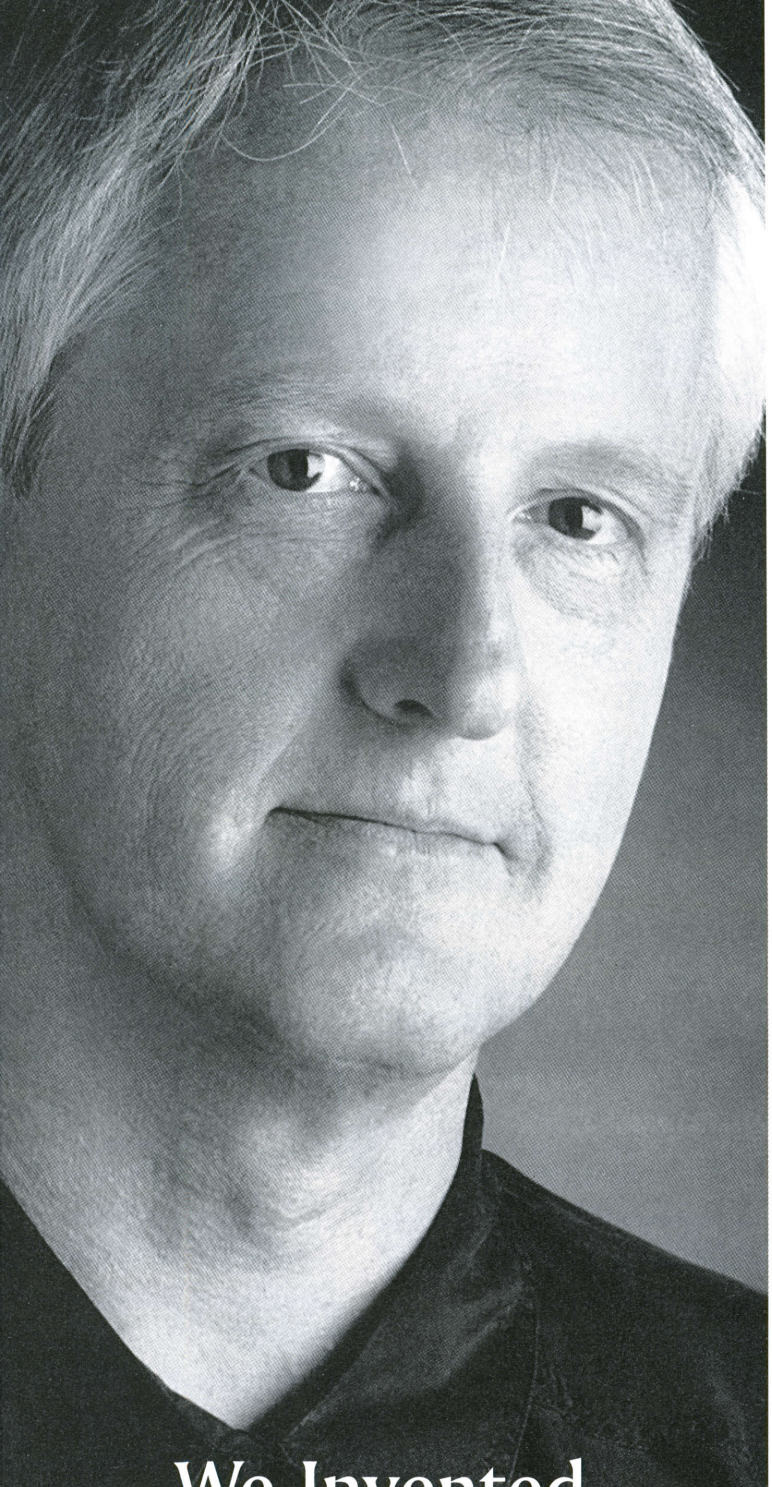

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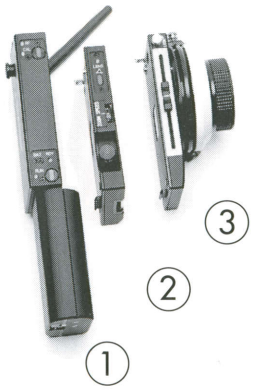

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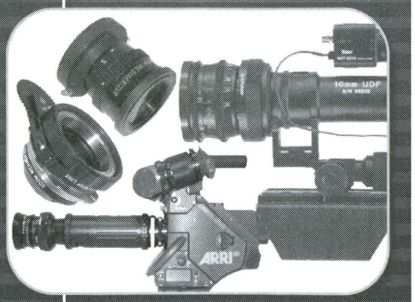

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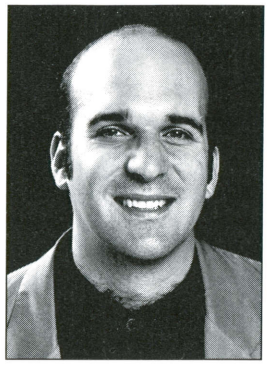


June is traditionally the month when both the seasonal temperature and box-office receipts begin to rise. Each year at this time, the major studios trundle out their summer blockbusters — big films with big stars (and even bigger budgets). The year 2000 is no exception, and this issue of *AC* offers comprehensive coverage that our readers can peruse in those extra-long ticket and popcorn lines.

This year's pole position belongs to *Gone in 60 Seconds,* a hot-wired, gear-slamming remake of H.B. Halicki's 1974 cult classic about crackerjack car thieves. Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, directed by Dominic Sena and photographed by Paul Cameron, this outlaw tale promises to keep viewers clutching at their armrests. Our coverage ("Pedal to the Metal," page 34) was penned by Jay Holben, a thoroughly decent chap who always buckles up.

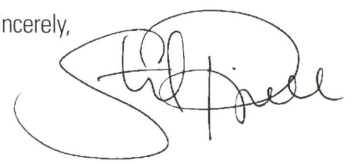
Also promising the prospect of an air-conditioned thrill ride is *Mission: Impossible 2,* John Woo's sequel to the 1996 update of the 1960s television series (whew!). Cinematographer Jeffrey Kimball, ASC deftly handled Mr. Woo's gymnastic cameras on location in Australia, and the result is a state-of-the-art cloak-and-dagger caper. Our man in Manhattan, Eric Rudolph, tracked Kimball down and subjected him to a thorough interrogation ("Secret Agent Man," page 52).

Here in the U.S., inner-city crime is swept up by a super-smooth detective in *Shaft,* which retools the landmark 1971 "blaxploitation" classic. Directed by John Singleton, photographed by Don Thorin, ASC and starring Samuel L. Jackson as the titular tough guy, the new version ("Talkin' 'Bout Shaft, page 66) has plenty of panache.

In addition to these pictures, we've included coverage of two blockbuster-style thrillers that hit theaters *before* the summer. *Pitch Black,* directed by David Twohy and photographed by David Eggby, ACS, used light — or the absence thereof — as its central dramatic element. Ron Magid revisits the film's alien world, where flying predators threaten to devour the entire crew of a crashed spacecraft ("Night Terrors," page 110). *U-571,* skippered by Jonathan Mostow and shot by Oliver Wood, offered intense drama aboard a World War II submarine, and staff editor Douglas Bankston managed to capture some of the film's top-secret lighting plots for your inspection ("Wet and Wild," page 118).

This issue of AC also includes interviews with 1999's ASC- and Academy Award-nominated cinematographers (page 74), coverage of the Sci-Tech Awards (page 138) and another of those straight-from-the-set schematics ("Moving to the Music," page 128) that proved so popular in our March lighting issue.

Sincerely,



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Canadian Film Explores Full Range of Human Emotions

by Mark Dillon

Richard (Philippe Volter) and Gail (Pascale Bussières) are among the neighbors whose lives become entwined by the disappearance of a little girl in *The Five Senses.*

The moody urban ensemble drama *The Five Senses* was one of the "buzz" films at last fall's Toronto International Film Festival, capturing the Toronto-City Award for Best Canadian Feature Film. It was also recognized at the 2000 Genie Awards (the Canadian Oscars), where Jeremy Podeswa took the prize for achievement in direction and Gregory Middleton, CSC, was nominated for his cinematography.

Podeswa and Middleton's teaming had its origins on the set of Atom Egoyan's *The Sweet Hereafter* (see *AC* Dec. '97); Middleton was executing the helicopter shots, and Podeswa was doing publicity. (Podeswa had established himself as a promising director three years earlier with his debut feature, *Eclipse.*)

When Podeswa began preparing his second feature, he remembered Middleton, whose work on the feature *Kissed* (see *AC* March '97) had made a particularly strong impression. Podeswa explains, "I thought if he could do a film like that with someone like Lynne [Stopkewich, the director], whom I really relate to, then we'd get along great." For his part, Middleton thought Podeswa's script for *The Five Senses* was "amazing," and he signed on eagerly.

The Vancouver-based Middleton's work on *Kissed,* a surprisingly sympathetic film about a young, female necrophiliac that became the sleeper hit of the 1996 Toronto Film Festival, and on director Raul Sanchez Inglis's *The Falling* (1998) earned him Genie nominations, and he has since devoted himself almost entirely to features.

The Five Senses integrates five subplots involving neighboring apartment dwellers who are connected by the disappearance of a little girl in a nearby park. The main characters each have a strong yet frustrated association with the human senses: a masseuse (Gabrielle Rose) can touch strangers, but she has no feelings for her voyeuristic daughter (Nadia Litz); an eye doctor

(Philippe Volter) is losing his hearing; a chef (Mary-Louise Parker) makes desserts that look good but taste terrible; and a house cleaner (Daniel MacIvor) claims that he can smell love, but cannot seem to find it.

Preproduction included three weeks of discussion among Podeswa, Middleton and production designer Taavo Soodor. They consulted various visual references for their use of light and color, including the melancholy paintings of 20th century American realist Edward Hopper. They also studied the stark images of photographer Nan Goldin and the films of Michelangelo Antonioni, Bernardo Bertolucci and Krzysztof Kieslowski.

During these sessions, Middleton noted the stylistic tendencies in Podeswa's favorite films. "In *Last Tango in Paris*, there are a lot of mixed color temperatures," he notes. "You'll find phone booths with warmer lights in the middle of cool-looking hallways. The café might be a normal color, but the phone booth is really orange."

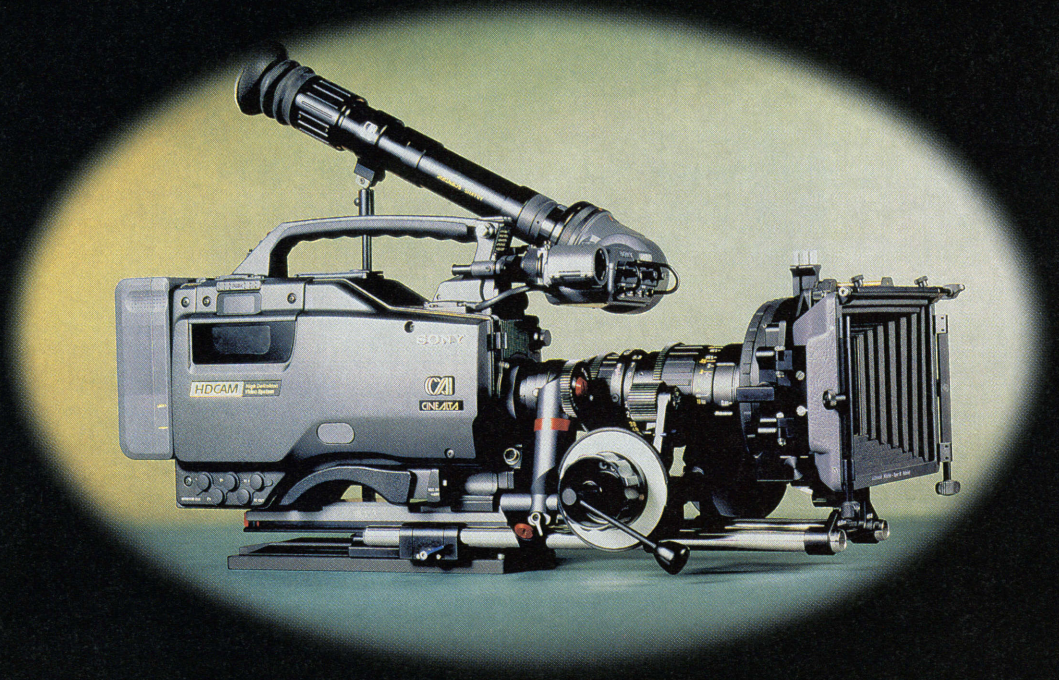
This principle influenced Middleton's approach to *The Five Senses* — the characters' interior spaces are lit with a somewhat golden glow, whereas the colors outside their windows are noticeably cool. "We were going for a very autumnal feel outside," Podeswa says. "For me, the film is about characters in some sort of transition, and autumn is a season of transition. We wanted to bring that inside as well, so the color palette is very muted." At the same time, the director did not want the film to be too bleak. "I wanted the light to come from the characters, so that viewers would feel compassion for them. Greg interpreted that in his own way [by] mixing [the color temperatures]."

Part of this approach meant firmly controlling the colors that appear on camera. Soodor kept the location décor within the bounds of the agreed-upon color scheme — occasionally going to extremes in order to do so. "If there was a tomato in a kitchen, Taavo would spray-paint it!" Podeswa recalls, laughing. "He would bring it down so it wasn't pop-out red, [but instead] a muted rust."

The Five Senses was shot entirely on location in Toronto over 25 days in November of 1998. Middleton, functioning as his own camera operator, worked with an Arriflex BL-4, shooting on Kodak Vision 500T 5279 stock for interiors and Kodak EXR 5293 for exteriors. (Local equipment house PS Production Services provided camera, lighting and grip equipment.) He chose the faster stocks because he knew that many shooting days would extend beyond sunset, and numerous scenes set during the day would have to be filmed at night.

One such sequence is set in a church, where a call girl (Pascale Bussières) brings the eye doctor to hear

Photo by Johnnie Eisen, courtesy of Odeon Films.



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the beautiful sounds of a choir while he still can. The cinematographer notes that it's difficult to light a church interior from the outside on a limited budget because the stained-glass windows are so thick. "The church wasn't enormous," he says, "but we saw a lot of windows in the film. It was a bit of a challenge for gaffer Terry Banting, key grip Dave Erlichman and focus puller Monica Guddat, but they did a great job." For that sequence, the crew supplemented its normal lighting kit — an 18K HMI Fresnel, a 6K and two 4K HMI Pars — with two additional 18Ks.

The film was shot with lenses that fell mostly in the 28mm-65mm range. There were exceptions, however, with long lenses employed for point-of-view shots and to emphasize distance. This aesthetic particularly came into play with the character of Rachel, the teen voyeur. "Rachel stares at people, so we used a few long lenses for scenes in which she's looking at them," Middleton notes. In the most extreme cases, he re-created her POV with a 200mm lens.

The crew's resourcefulness was put to the test in a scene in which a mother (Molly Parker) realizes that her daughter is missing and runs to the park to find her. Podeswa and Middleton wanted a crane shot that started very high to emphasize the enormity of the challenge facing the distraught woman. Unfortunately, they were unable to do the shot on the day when a proper crane had been booked. When they finally *were* able to do the shot, they had to use a Condor that was designed as a lift for light fixtures. "You can do descending crane shots with that type of equipment, as long as the motor isn't on," Middleton explains. "It's hydraulic, so once it gets moving, it's extremely smooth. The start is pretty good, but the stop isn't." To avoid the inclusion of the move's bumpy stop, the action cuts on the move as Parker runs out of the shot.

"Greg's very willing to experiment and fail — he'll do whatever is necessary," says Podeswa. "What I appreciate about him is that the work he does with me doesn't look like the work he does with somebody else." ■

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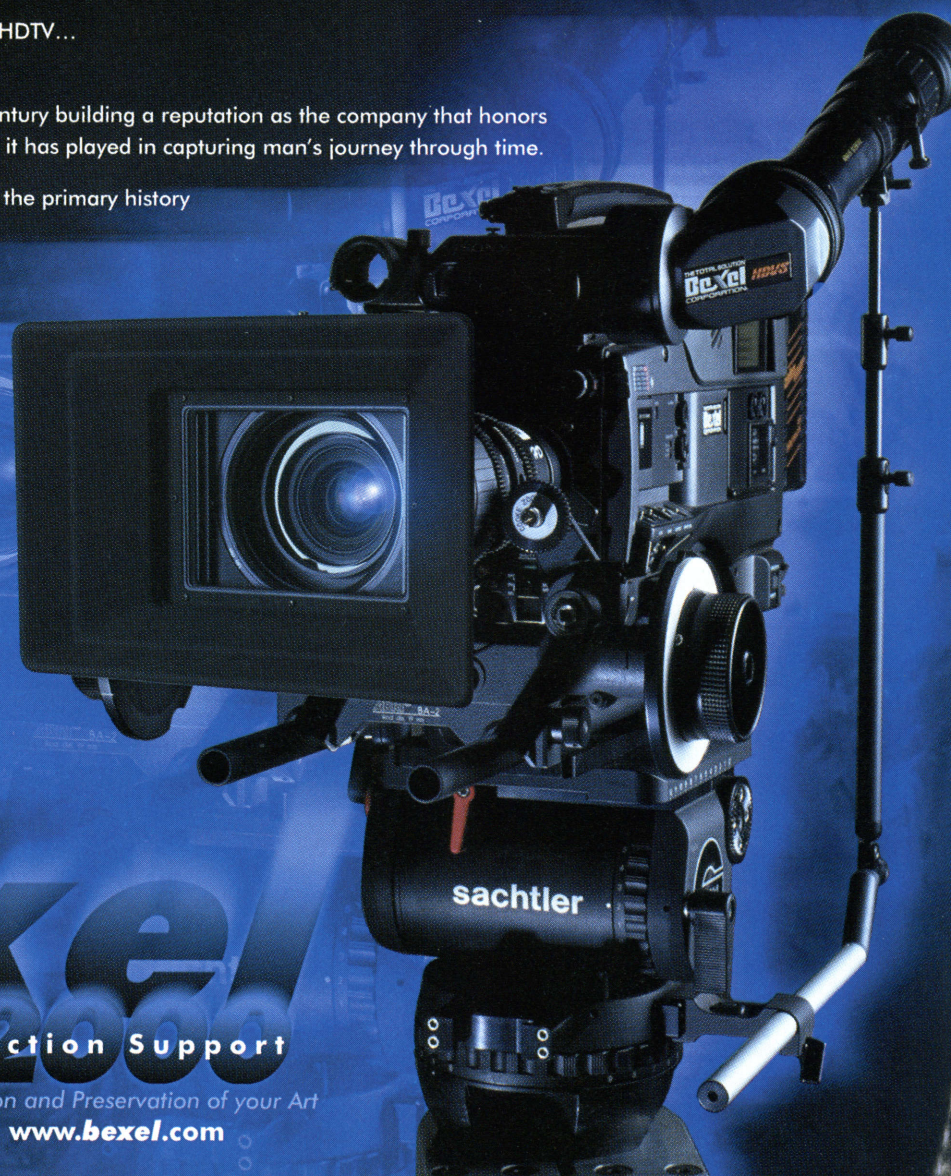

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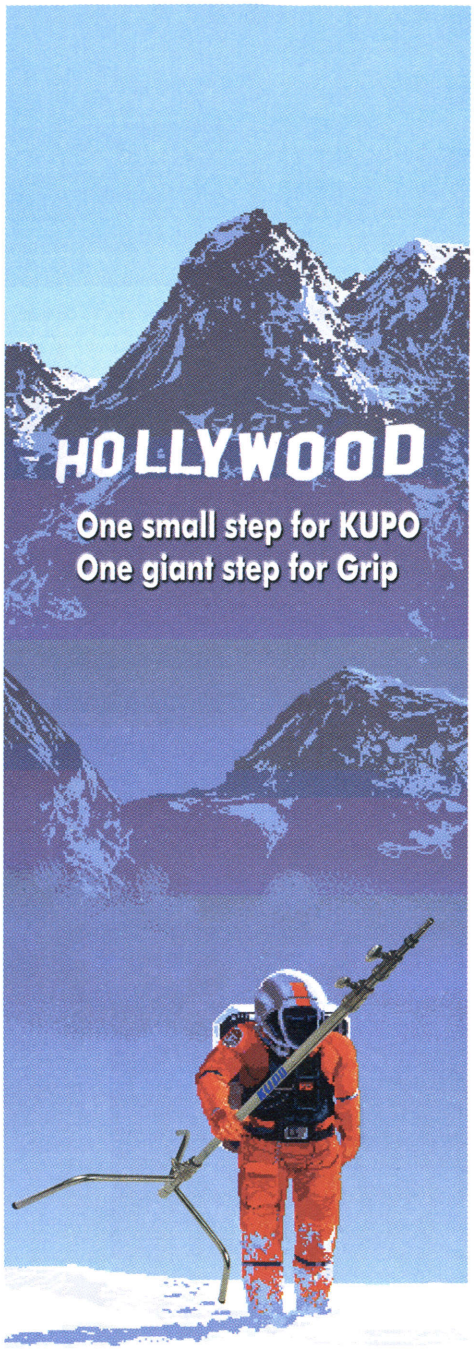

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DVD Playback

by Chris Pizzello

Eyes Wide Shut
Warner Home Video, $24.98
Full-frame, Dolby Digital 5.1

During a recent guest appearance on *Roger Ebert & The Movies,* Martin Scorsese ranked Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut* as the fourth best film of the 1990s. Elsewhere, the critical re-evaluation of the late director's final opus is right on schedule. Greeted with hoots of critical derision and general bafflement from audiences upon its release last summer, Kubrick's enigmatic film was done in by two of the most irritating banes of contemporary movie culture: misleading pre-release hype (for which Kubrick was at least partly responsible) and a general refusal by audiences to accept marquee stars in anything but the most literal of films.

Slow, labored and carefully ambiguous, *Eyes Wide Shut* is an old-school art film that asks more questions than it answers. The film is the perfect Freudian end piece to Kubrick's filmography, in that it portrays the constant tension between our logical, "civilized" selves (embodied in the film by bourgeois doctor Bill Harford, played by Tom Cruise) and the repressed, primal impulses that constantly threaten to undermine us.

It's a much-debated question whether *Eyes Wide Shut* takes place entirely within the seething subconscious of Harford, who goes on a nocturnal bender through the streets of New York after his wife (Nicole Kidman) admits that she once had powerful feelings of lust for another man. The film's dreamlike ambience is due in part to Kubrick and lighting cameraman Larry Smith's unconventional decision to force-develop their film stocks, lending a grainy, disorienting feel to Harford's dark night of the soul.

With this solid transfer in the full-frame ratio preferred by Kubrick, Warner Home Video has somewhat atoned for last year's flawed boxed set, *The Stanley Kubrick Collection.* An essential element of Kubrick's films is the subliminal effect of certain colors, and thankfully, this disk offers brilliant color saturation — note the deep, garish reds in the masked ball sequence and the cool, blue tones of Harford's home. Image sharpness and contrast are excellent, and the clean Dolby Digital 5.1 soundtrack immerses the viewer in composer Jocelyn Pook's moody, discordant score.

In terms of extras, viewers get production notes, three of Kubrick's arresting trailers for the film, and separate interviews with Steven Spielberg (Kubrick's longtime friend) and husband-and-wife stars Cruise and Kidman. Cruise's interview is the most interesting, because the notoriously cautious star lets his guard down for once. (Watch for the moment when, with one unexpected four-letter expletive, the world's biggest movie star reveals what it was like to play the repressed Harford for more than *two years* under Kubrick's notoriously perfectionist direction.)

But the praise stops there. An asterisk should be placed on this DVD's slipcase because of the studio's shameful decision to present the much-derided, digitally altered version of the film that was released in U.S. theaters, instead of the uncut version seen by the rest of the world. The creation of digital onlookers to block the simulated sex in the film's elaborate orgy sequence is not only clumsy-looking but illogical, since the scene in question is intended to be from the voyeuristic Harford's point of view. Why not release a DVD with a seamless branching feature (seen in New Line's

continued on page 17

The Revolution at Clairmont

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American Cinematographer

THE OBVIOUS CHOICE.

Crash), offering both the R-rated and unrated versions of the film on one disk? Another option would have been to release two different disks. Surely the final film in Kubrick's peerless body of work was worth the extra investment.

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
Columbia TriStar Home Video, $27.95
1.33:1, Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono

Made in that halcyon era before American filmmakers (and America itself) became so damn cynical, Frank Capra's 1939 picture, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington,* plays like a political prelude to his widely beloved 1946 humanist classic, *It's a Wonderful Life.* Both films espouse Capra's great theme: the profound difference a single man makes to the world around him. Jimmy Stewart is perfectly cast as Jefferson (get it?) Smith, a wet-behind-the-ears civic crusader hastily drafted by the powers-that-be to replace a veteran Montana senator who has unexpectedly passed away. Chosen under the assumption that a newcomer will be an easily manipulated rube, Smith quickly becomes disgusted by the strong-arm tactics and sheer corruption inside the Senate, and mounts a stirring, one-man rebellion.

Since this *is* a Capra film, there are a few corny moments and a happy ending that is perhaps too inevitable. But the director always *earned* the right to leave 'em smiling as the lights went up — in this case, the dues are paid during Smith's wrenching, marathon filibuster in the Senate, which remains as emotionally powerful as any scene in the Capra canon. And you just have to love any film that features an out-of-control street battle between Smith's pint-sized army of Boy Rangers and the hardened droogs of newspaper magnate Jim Taylor (Edward Arnold).

Mr. Smith was expertly photographed by Capra's longtime cinematographer, Joseph Walker, ASC. While the tale is mostly told in Capra's patented, simple, straightforward style, there are indelible moments of pure cinema throughout, such as the artfully composed visit to the Lincoln monument, the smooth tracking shot behind Smith as he first enters the awesome environs of the Senate (painstakingly re-created in Columbia's Gower Street studio in Hollywood), and the eloquent, extended detail shot of Smith's fumbling hands as he grips his hat and stammers nervously to Senator Paine's beautiful daughter.

This DVD looks about as good as one can reasonably expect from a film made more than 50 years ago. The Library of Congress National Film Registry spent three years and $100,000 to restore the film from the surviving original negative materials. The black-and-white image flickers in some scenes, and there are a few jarring edits (perhaps due to missing frames), but overall, this DVD features robust blacks, good sharpness, and clearly rendered dialogue with a minimum of hiss. Additional goodies include a short but useful featurette; the charming, old-fashioned trailer; vintage advertising stills; complete filmographies of the principals, and a laid-back audio commentary from the director's son, Frank Capra Jr., a respected film producer in his own right. Unfortunately, the younger Capra's commentary is a bit of a snooze; while he tells plenty of informative backstage stories about his famous dad, he often only skims over what we're actually watching onscreen — a shortcoming that afflicts many DVD commentaries. Nevertheless, this disk remains a fine rendering of an American classic. ■

DVDs for review should be sent to the attention of AC *Executive Editor Stephen Pizzello, 1782 N. Orange Drive, Hollywood, California 90028.*

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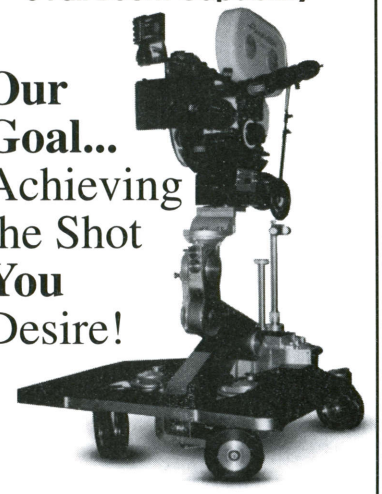

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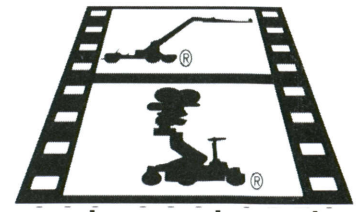

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Production Slate

compiled by Douglas Bankston

The Last September **chronicles the end of British rule in Ireland in 1920, as seen through the eyes of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy. Pictured at near right, clockwise from left, are Lois Farquar (Keeley Hawes), Laurence Carstairs (Jonathan Slinger), Francie (Jane Birkin) and Hugo (Lambert Wilson) Montmorency, and Lady Myra (Maggie Smith). At far right, Lois takes a spin with Capt. Gerald Colthurst (David Tennant).**

A Lush But Torn Landscape

by Jay Holben

Based on Elizabeth Bowen's acclaimed novel, *The Last September* chronicles the demise of British rule in Ireland, an event that laid to rest a way of life that had survived for centuries. The film is a psychological drama that depicts the tension between love and the longing for freedom, and the conflict between tradition and the terrifying prospect of political and spiritual independence. But above all, it is a portrait of a young woman's coming of age in an anguished time.

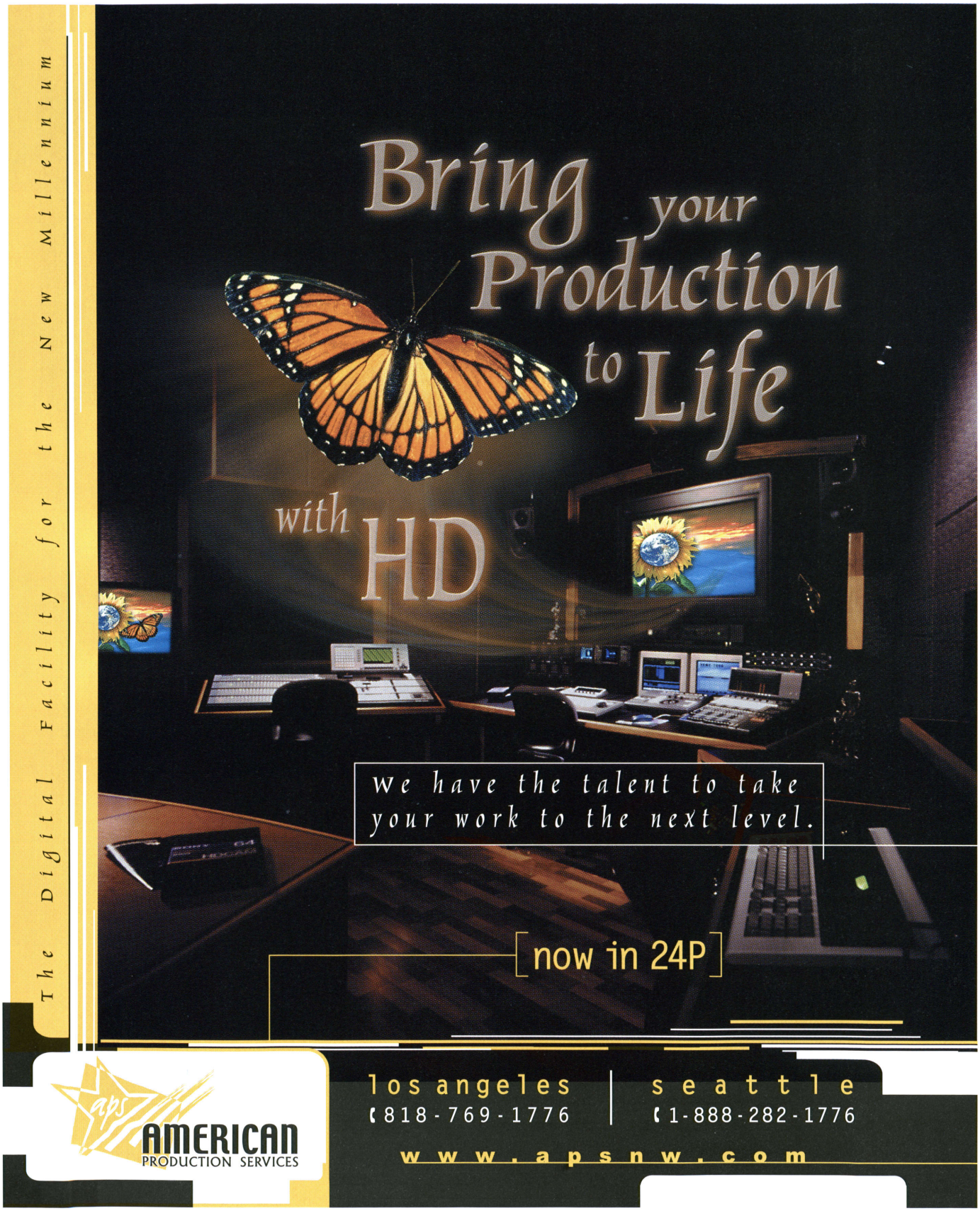
The story is set in 1920 in County Cork, where Sir Richard Naylor (Michael Gambon) and his wife, Lady Myra (Maggie Smith), live in a luxurious country home called Danielstown. The pair are members of the Ascendancy, a class of Anglo-Irish aristocracy whose wealthy and graceful way of life is coming to an end. All around Danielstown, the "native" Irish are carrying on the struggle for independence in a small-scale but violent battle against the British Army. The Naylors maintain a skeptical attitude toward the conflict around them, insisting it is no more than the usual shenanigans that the natives have engaged in since time immemorial. But behind the façade of tennis parties and social dances, everyone in the Ascendancy is aware that the end of their time is approaching.

Neil Jordan signed on as executive producer of the film, and he sent the screenplay to Deborah Warner, a native of Oxford, England, who had built a reputation directing theater and opera but had never directed a film. Warner, an associate director at London's acclaimed Royal National Theater, had recently directed Fiona Shaw in *The Waste Land* on Broadway (a production that received two New York Drama Desk awards), and many of her other productions had toured extensively in Europe. When she hesitated about accepting Jordan's offer to direct *The Last September*, he encouraged her to read the novel. She says she fell in love with Bowen's writing. "Sometimes it is so beautiful it hurts," Warner opines. "She explores the tightrope between the surface of how people present themselves and their seething, boiling, emotional worlds beneath. With seeming effortlessness, she combines this intensity with a meticulous observation and social comedy."

Although she was inspired by Bowen's work, Warner says it was the prospect of collaborating with Polish

cinematographer Slawomir Idziak that cemented her decision to direct the film. "I think he is, to a degree, the man who made me most confident to move forward with the project," she offers. "I knew that I needed him as my inspiration. As a first-time film director, my collaborator was of tremendous significance. The excitement of working in a new form is, in part, that you are going to find new collaborators and meet

Photos by Tom Collins, courtesy of Trimark Pictures.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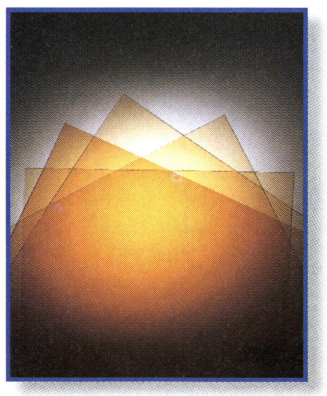

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Marda Norton (Fiona Shaw), left, gives Lois (Keeley Hawes) some advice. *The Last September* marks the film-directing debut of Deborah Warner, an associate director at London's Royal National Theatre.

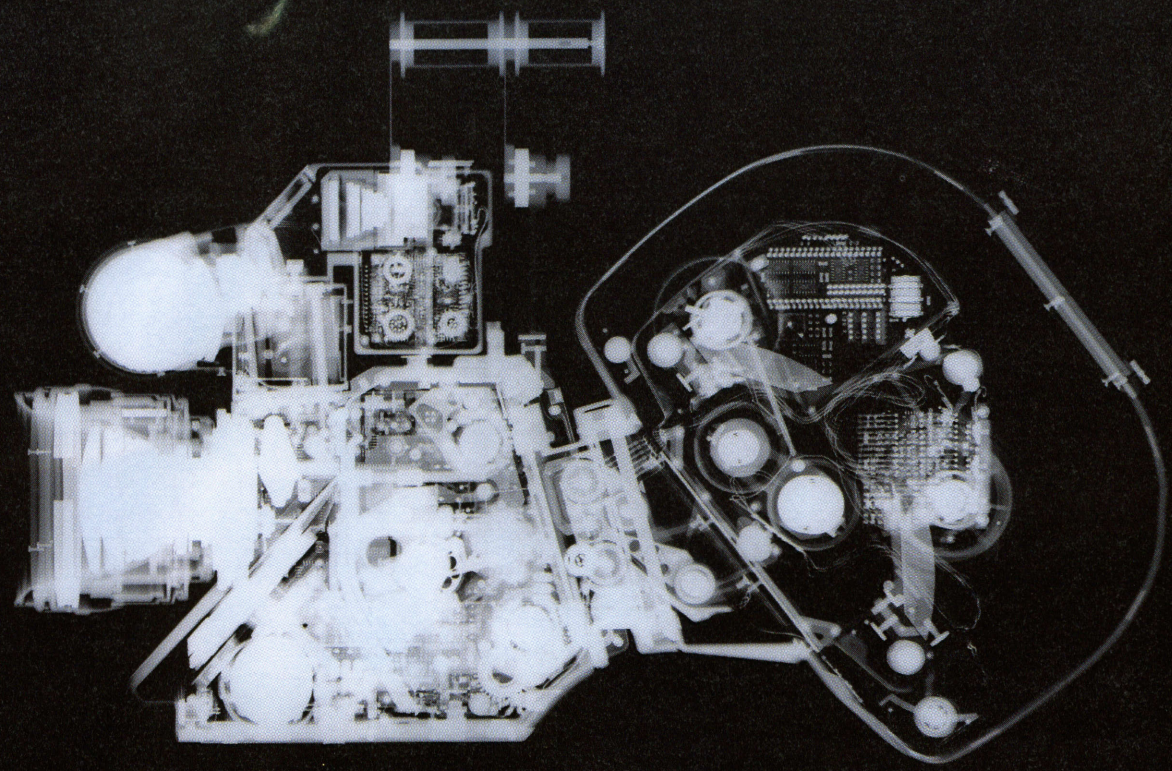
new people. He was definitely at the top of my list, and within minutes of our first meeting, I knew I couldn't make the film without him — [if I did,] I would feel that I had missed out on the best guide, the best teacher and certainly the most inspiring person I could work with."

Idziak, whose feature credits include *Gattaca, Men With Guns,* and Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Blue* and *The Double Life of Véronique,* grew up in a family of still photographers. He soon decided that "instead of shooting still pictures, I wanted to move them." Warner describes the cinematographer as "a very, very hard taskmaster. I wanted a kind of Zen instructor who would never let me rest or settle — who would never let me feel that I might be content with an idea, but would always be stretching for a better one. He was really tough on me, and I relished that. I think he is a poet, and his genius is in proposing new ways of seeing a scene for the audience, and offering a chance of seeing something in quite a different way. For me, that is the very definition of a cinematographer."

Idziak likes to be involved in production as early as possible, something he says is commonplace in the Polish film community. "In Poland, where the approach is completely different from that in the United States, the cinematographer is considered to be the director's most important collaborator. The director approaches the cinematographer first, and the cinematographer begins collaborating on the screenplay before it is finished. This does not mean that cinematographers are rewriting stories; it means we have input that can help to tell the story in a more visual way to suit the medium. I believe these discussions are of considerable value."

Warner was able to include Idziak in the final stages of script development for *The Last September.* "I spent quite a few days with him in Warsaw, working very closely on the script and discussing the potential visual language for it. He really gets into the heart of the story. In my theatrical work, I'm used to collaborators who feel that they have the right to speak about parts of the work that, in a more conventional sense, wouldn't be their business, so I'm very comfortable with that type of involvement."

Warner and Idziak traveled to County Cork during preproduction, and although they were not able to film there for budgetary reasons, seeing Bowen's native land helped them envision the



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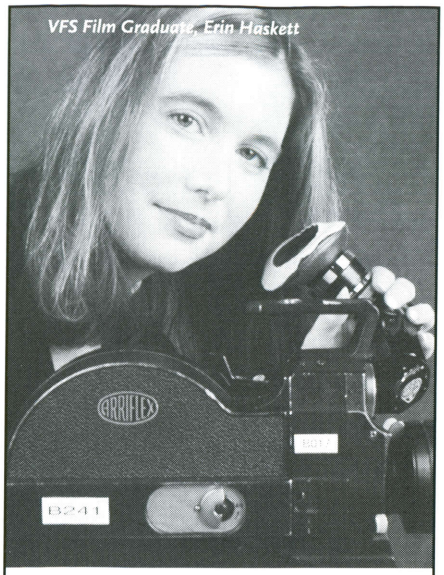

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film. "Part of why I was so taken with the novel and the idea of filming it was that Bowen has a very cinematographic eye and a very strong relationship to light," Warner observes. "She actually trained as a painter as a very young woman, and the light of County Cork obsesses her; she writes about it almost continuously. The colors there are truly very vibrant. It was high summer when we visited, and the vegetation was very lush and very rich. It's unlike anything you would ever see in England or in Northern Ireland. [Idziak] has a luxurious and fantastic fascination with color, and I adore what he's done to the color of Ireland. It's an astonishing green — a vivid, mad, heightened green that just takes your breath away."

Idziak says his use of color in *The Last September* is "hard for me to define. Color is a sort of gate to the audience's emotional relationship to the story. *The Last September* is a very theatrical story; it's a very Chekhovian kind of production, so I felt the camera should serve that form of narrative. In theater, lighting is not real — it is a symbol of reality. A sunset is not a real sunset, night is not real night; it is light that represents a sunset or night. Utilizing a theatrical concept in my lighting was my way of telling the story in a more attractive way."

The cinematographer says the "visual dramaturgy" of his craft is more important to him than its technical aspects. "When I am asked to teach a group of would-be cinematographers, I do not concentrate on the technical aspects; rather, I speak about the visual dramaturgy of cinematography. It's imperative to understand that the visual language has a completely different dramaturgical structure than the story does. I am not so interested in technical discussions about which cameras or film stocks I use— these types of discussions sell our profession as a strictly technical profession, which I don't believe it is. A large part of the technique is not about what tools you are using — because generally speaking, we're all using the same tools — but the understanding of the visual story."

Idziak's gaffer on *The Last September*, James McGuire (who also worked with him on *Love and Rage*), says Idziak "utilizes color far more than any other director of photography I've ever worked with. We used a big range of colors: greens, yellows, blues and occasionally reds. Based on the script, and based on the feel and color of a particular room, [Idziak] would try to pick up a certain hue in each room and make that a base for that environment.

"He also worked to bring the outside environment into the house through the use of color," McGuire continues. "If we could see through a window and there was greenery out there, we would use a matching green gel to bring ambient light into the room. If there were trees with yellow leaves outside, then we would match that yellow. Sometimes we would cover the full window with a particular colored gel to accentuate what was outside."

McGuire cited Idziak's extensive use of filters as a unique aspect of his visual style. "He has thousands of his own specially made color grad filters, which allow him to visually mask whatever shot he wants to do. If he wants to just highlight somebody's eyes, he has a filter that he can drop in front of the lens; it will darken all the areas of the frame except the actor's eyes. He can create a matte to any sort of degree around any person or object. If we were in a room where he wanted the light down a bit on one portion of the wall, he would slip in a filter to take it down. When I first heard about this technique, I thought, 'I don't see how it's going to work,' but when you see it through the camera, it is amazing."

"I often work with different shapes of grad filters," Idziak affirms. "I use quite a lot of them. They are another storytelling component, a method of directing the audience's attention toward or away from something. Filters are a way of adding another level to the visual dramaturgy of the picture, and they are also tools for expressing the emotional content of the moment. When I need some openness, I get rid of the grad filters — the picture automatically

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becomes brighter and more open, and has a completely different dramatic accent."

Warner says she was convinced that a cinematographer with "a contemporary eye" should photograph *The Last September*, and she is thrilled with Idziak's work. "I knew the film needed to be very beautiful in a very rich sense, but that it also needed to be quite new — I didn't want a 'period'-looking film in any way," she says. "[Idziak] creates symphonic visuals with layers upon layers of imagery; he is not only a true poet, he is a composer who composes ravishingly beautiful and complex images."

Academy Awards host Billy Crystal (right) interacts with a "temporary" Don Corleone on a partially rebuilt set from *The Godfather* in a scene from the short film that introduced Crystal at this year's ceremony. Visual-effects compositors later matched the footage with the scene from Francis Ford Coppola's classic film, making it appear as though the comic was consulting with Marlon Brando.

Comic Trip

by Rachael K. Bosley

When Billy Crystal decided he wanted to sit at a table with Charlie Chaplin, seek counsel from Don Corleone and nettle James Dean until he leapt from a speeding car in the short film that would open this year's Academy Awards ceremony, he turned to the same talents who had made his short films for the ceremonies in 1997 and 1998: director Troy Miller and cinematographer Clyde Smith of Dakota Films. In those shorts, a wisecracking Crystal was seamlessly inserted into the films nominated for best picture. For this year's short, however, the comic wanted something different: an homage to American film. It was clear to the Dakota Films team at the outset that slipping Crystal into films made as early as 1925 (*The Gold Rush*) would require meticulous planning — not to mention close consultation with supervising visual-effects compositor Patrick Clancey, who would be overseeing postproduction at The Post Group.

During its 6.5-minute running time, the Oscar film uses visual and aural clips to reference about 70 pictures. The short opens with footage from *2001: A Space Odyssey*, only this time, the famous bone tossed into the air by an ape lands on Crystal's head, sending him through a wormhole of film history and depositing him into *The Gold Rush*. From there, the comic steps into such classics as *Taxi Driver*, *The French Connection*, *The Graduate* and *Spartacus*, in many cases interacting with central characters — or so it seems. Crystal finally arrives at the Shrine Auditorium in downtown Los Angeles, after falling from Elliot and E.T.'s flying bicycle and narrowly avoiding a confrontation with the gangs of *West Side Story*.

According to Miller, the filmmakers sat down with Crystal and his team of writers in mid-February and spent about two weeks planning the film. Miller developed detailed storyboards and animatics to give everyone an idea of how the jokes would play, and Smith began examining footage from the films Crystal wanted to enter in order to plan how to match the cinematography. Working with a budget of about $170,000, half of which was earmarked for postproduction, the filmmakers determined which sequences would have to be shot using greenscreen and which ones would require production designer Dan Butts to re-create portions of sets. "We simply looked at the shots we were matching, weighed what the effects time would be combined with the production time, and valued that against the money we had," Miller says. Adds Smith, "Some sets we just couldn't duplicate on our own, especially when Billy appears alongside a character from the movie."

Smith opted to shoot with an Arriflex 535B equipped with an Angenieux 25-250 HR zoom. For one shot — in which the camera seems to drop straight onto Crystal's head — the cinematographer employed an Arriflex 35-3 and a Canon 17-35mm zoom. "It was really a very simple package," he admits. Knowing that Clancey's postproduction work would be extensive, Smith chose Kodak Vision 320T 5277 for its fine grain. "It's a really flexible stock; we can make it look like anything else," he says. "The ISO of 320T is fast enough that we can work within a tight lighting budget, though I always give it an extra one-third of a stop exposure to capture any shadow detail we might need." For the three-day shoot on a Burbank soundstage, the cinematographer assembled a dozen each of 10K HMIs, 5K HMIs and 2K HMIs, plus six 2.5K HMI Pars to simulate skylight. He adds, "I used a couple of big-eyes [10K Fresnels] to emulate the sun."

Most of Smith's work consisted of determining the focal length, lenses and lighting strategies employed by award-winning cinematographers and figuring out how to make fresh footage of Crystal match those specifications. "I don't talk to the cinematographers; I just watch the films many times and figure it out," Smith says. "It's amazing what even the great films get away with! The key light on the *Spartacus* scene is coming from about four different angles at the same time, and we still can't figure out where the lamp is supposed to be in [Travis Bickle's apartment in] *Taxi Driver* — it moves around." Miller credits Smith with

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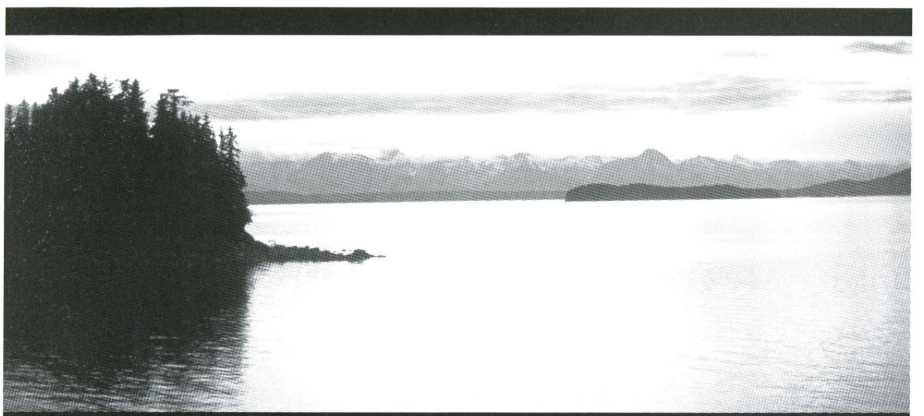
Cinematographer Clyde Smith gets a reading on Billy Crystal for a greenscreen sequence that will eventually place the comic at Charlie Chaplin's table in *The Gold Rush.*

helping to trim time and money from the shoot: "Clyde's idea of using a deep format and wide shots was key. He is great at figuring out how to make blocking work in one shot, which eliminates unnecessary coverage."

Despite all of the advanced technology at his disposal, Smith confesses that his favorite part of the shoot was filming the wormhole sequence that leads to all of the clips. "We used some Source 4 Lekos and a Mole Baby, and we had Billy in the middle of a dozen crew guys, who were each panning lights, putting in Gobos or changing gels. It was a totally in-camera effect — just the light on his face — and in these days of high technology, it was fun."

Clancey and his crew at The Post Group — Mark Intravartolo, Deborah Ristic, Chris Clausing and Ken Kuwada — spent almost four weeks finishing the film. Once the film was delivered, it was transferred on a Spirit High-Definition telecine in standard definition. Editor Steve Welch assembled a cut of the film, and Clancey and his crew went to work using Discreet Logic Fire and Inferno software. "One of the bigger challenges this year is that we were dealing with older footage, whereas in the previous Oscar films we were matching contemporary stock," Clancey notes. "Not only did we have to put Billy into the older footage and match his look to the footage, but even the items shot practically [on sets] had to be grain-matched and color-matched."

Clancey had also supervised postproduction on Crystal's previous Oscar films, and because he knew this year's short would require twice as many visual effects, he consulted with Smith and Miller regularly during their prep. "I knew I would be involved in a lot of grain matching, and I didn't want to be fighting [Smith's] grain," he notes. "With all of the greenscreen, we needed the footage to be as clean as possible." One piece of advice he gave Smith was to shoot Crystal's *Gold Rush* insert at 18 frames per second, because that's the speed at which silent films were shot. "That gave Billy a more realistic look, and his motions matched [Chaplin's footage] better." ➢



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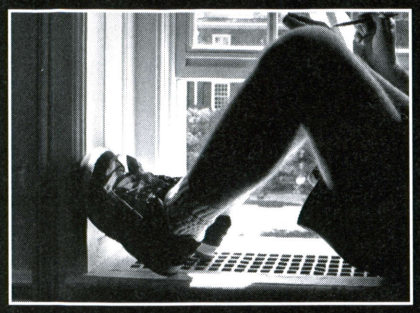

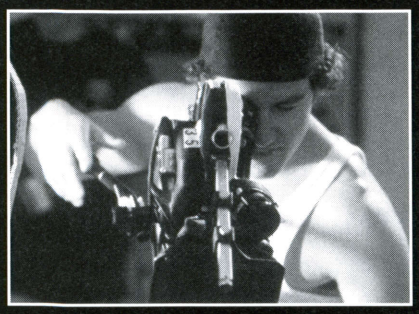

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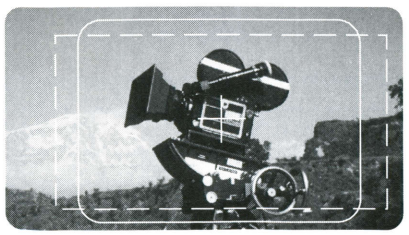

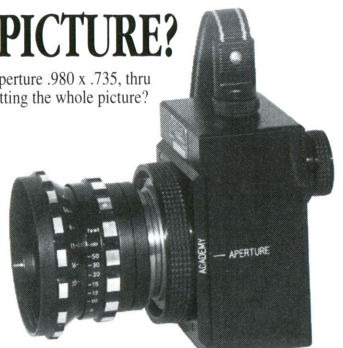

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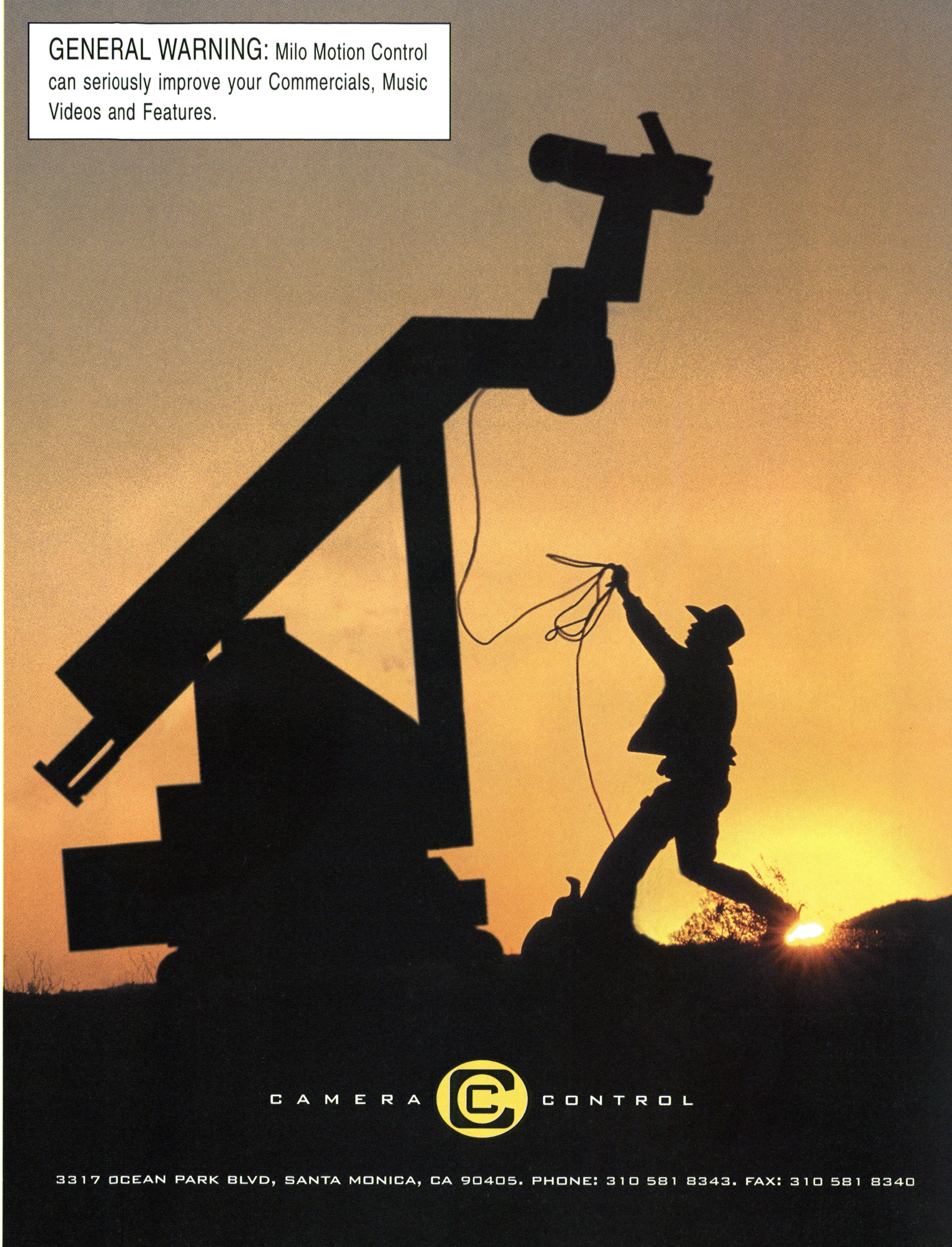
One of the most difficult sequences to perfect was the ride Crystal appears to take with James Dean in *Rebel Without A Cause*. "We had to make it look like Billy was sitting in the front seat with Dean, and the car was moving all over the place. I tracked Billy into the shot frame by frame, matching the motion with the original material, and our rotomatte artist, Ken Kuwada, painted a frame-by-frame matte to hold out the foreground material, which placed Billy behind James Dean," Clancey recalls. "Clyde did a great job of matching the lighting, and the key to a good composite is always that the lighting matches the original material." Miller says he is especially pleased with that sequence: "We couldn't have matched James Dean and Billy in that two-shot within our budget two years ago. Also, it added a laugh."

Adding laughs has always been of keen interest to Miller and Smith, who first came to Crystal's attention when their film segments on the 1996 MTV Movie Awards (which parodied *A Few Good Men*, *Pulp Fiction* and *Twister*, among others) made a splash. By that time, they had spent more than 10 years working together and were veterans of low-budget television comedy. After meeting on the set of *Fridays*, ABC's short-lived, *Saturday Night Live*-style series, in 1980, the duo spent most of that decade working on HBO's *Not Necessarily the News*. Smith worked his way up from gaffer to director of photography, and Miller was a location supervisor and first assistant director. In 1991, the two teamed up for Fox's *The Sunday Comics*, and Miller credits that experience with fine-tuning their overall approach. "We did more than 100 short films for *Sunday Comics*," Miller says. "We had a very, very small budget, and we were shooting on 16mm and going for a big-movie feel. The material was powered by comedy and stand-up, and it led to the evolution of a certain production style: we could shoot on low budgets and do it very quickly."

By the time Miller and Smith got their first exposure on MTV's Movie Awards in 1996, Miller had directed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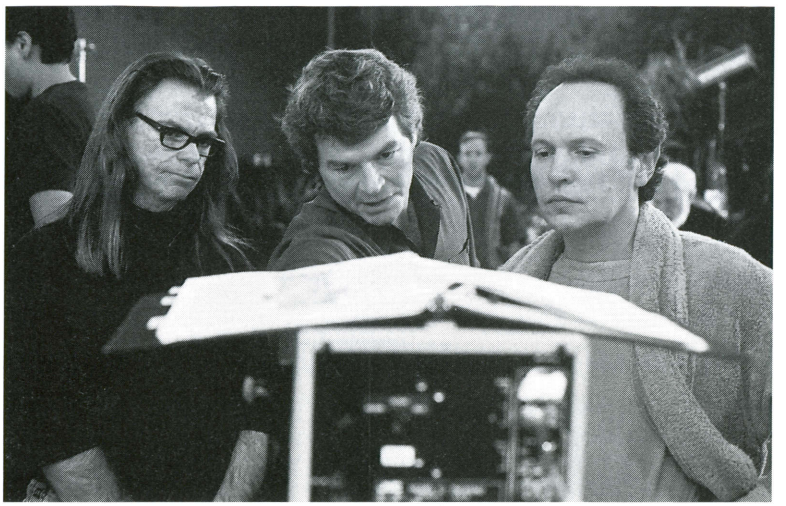

From left, director Troy Miller, cinematographer Clyde Smith and Billy Crystal prepare to shoot the *Spartacus* sequence. Miller says that this particular greenscreen sequence was one of the most difficult to get right, given the wide shots in Stanley Kubrick's epic that the filmmakers had to match.

Fox's *The Ben Stiller Show* (for which Smith shot the pilot episode) and Smith had shot several parodies for Al Yankovic. They had also launched *Mr. Show With Bob & David,* an HBO comedy that would run for four seasons. Clearly, they had found a niche. "What I like about parodies is that they are full of subliminal comedy," Miller says. "Another filmmaker has already laid the stage for the jokes; in a shot or two, the audience is already in on the joke."

In addition to becoming a staple at the MTV Movie Awards, Dakota Films' parodies have been featured on the Emmy Awards and MTV's Fashion Awards. But the Academy Awards show has given them their widest exposure by far. "I think we realized our specialty had actually become something when our first film for Billy got a standing ovation in 1997," Smith says. "I feel like I didn't choose this work; it chose me, and I enjoy it. As a cinematographer, I feel as if my repertoire of looks has been greatly expanded by emulating all of these wonderful films."

When this year's Oscar film hit the air, Miller and Smith were already at work on their next projects: Smith is shooting *Jumping for Joy,* a 1964 period piece about a 16-year-old girl who wants to play basketball, for director Tim Nelson; Miller is prepping *Run Ronnie Run,* a feature based on *The Ronnie Dobbs Story,* one of his short films for *Mr. Show* that starred David Cross and Bob Odenkirk. It will be his third feature, following *Jack Frost* (1998) and *The Announcement* (fall 2000).

Bay Area Celebration

The 20th Annual San Francisco Jewish Film Festival will showcase the cinematic diversity and vitality of Jewish culture at several venues throughout the

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Bay Area. Beginning at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, the festival will run from July 20-27 before moving to the UC Theatre in Berkeley, where it will be showcased from July 29-August 3. The film festival will also unspool at the Park Theatre in Menlo Park from July 30-August 3 and wrap up at the Rafael Film Center in San Rafael from August 5-7.

This year's festival features a gala tribute to the late German-Jewish composer Kurt Weill of "Mack the Knife" fame. Larry Weinstein's musical documentary tribute *September Songs*, featuring Lou Reed, William S. Burroughs, Elvis Costello, Betty Carter and more, will kick off the celebration. Included in the screenings will be *Free Fall*, a 1997 portrait of a Hungarian-Jewish family before World War II that will be accompanied by a minimalist-style oratorio composed by Tibor Szemzo, as well as the 1929 German expressionistic classic *The Golem*, with a new original score by Berkeley-based composer Daniel Hoffman.

For ticket information contact the Jewish Film Festival at (415) 552-3378 or visit the Web site at www.sfjff.org.

Maverick Winners

The 10th Annual Cinequest San Jose Film Festival, held earlier this year from February 24 through March 5, handed out awards to maverick filmmakers whose works were screened at the festival. The festival attracted over 45,000 attendees and 143 film entries. The Maverick Spirit Trophy for the work that most represented the vision of Cinequest was awarded to the feature *Janice Bear: 45 WPM* directed Claire Kilner of the United Kingdom, who also won Best First Feature. Best Dramatic Feature went to *Under the Sun*, directed by Colin Nutley of Sweden. Best Documentary went to Barry Blaustein's no-holds-barred *Beyond the Mat*. Best Short Narrative was won by Canada's Bruce McDonald and Don McKellar for *Elimination Dance*.

The Audience Choice Award for best narrative feature was actually a four-way tie among Anno Saul's *Green Desert*, Lorena Parlee's *Mexico*, Paul Lazarus's *Seven Girlfriends* and Colin Nutley's *Under the Sun*.

The Audience Choice Award for best documentary feature was given to Lisa F. Jackson for her *Life Afterlife*.

A special jury award, also known as the Guilty Pleasure Award, was given to Roger Nygard for his film *Suckers*, which the jury felt deserved special recognition for its entertaining political incorrectness.

Since it was staged in the heart of high-tech Silicon Valley, the festival's Maverick Technology Showcase was a popular venue. Manufacturers and film technology pioneers demonstrated and discussed new digital tools such as cameras, projection, editing and distribution. A number of the festival entries were shot using digital video, and several works were even screened using DLP digital projection. ■

Pedal to the Metal

Director Dominic Sena and cinematographer Paul Cameron rev up a rubber-burning remake of *Gone in 60 Seconds.*

by Jay Holben

Unit photography by Merrick Morton and Linda Chen

Every 30 seconds, a car is stolen in the United States. Whether the purpose is to execute a VIN-number swap and sale, to send parts to a chop-shop, or to facilitate a joyride, auto theft yields more than $1 million in losses every year. In 1993, California led the nation in car thefts, and 62 percent of them happened in Southern California. No matter what deterrent a car owner might choose — strident alarms, steering-wheel locks, engine disablers — pros can get past it in less time than it takes for a network television commercial break. The real hotshots can do it in less than 60 seconds.

Producer Jerry Bruckheimer, whose name has become synonymous with heart-stopping, adrenaline-rush blockbuster films, found it a natural choice to remake H.B. Halicki's 1974 cult classic *Gone in 60 Seconds*, the centerpiece of which is a 40-minute car chase. However, Bruckheimer is quick to point out that the new version is not simply a remake, but a complete rebuilding of the popular original. "When we decided to go ahead with this project, it was important to everyone that the spirit of the original film stay intact," he says. "But we've enlarged the scope of the story and more clearly defined the characters."

Bruckheimer chose Dominic Sena, a veteran director of commercials and music videos and a co-founder of Propaganda Films, to helm the project. "I would say that I was lovingly a fan of the original film," Sena offers. "Although I don't think that there was much of a story there, it certainly was a fun film." In an ironic twist that is perhaps only possible in Hollywood, one of the first films Sena worked on when he moved to Los Angeles in the late 1970s was Halicki's second film, *The Junkman*. "They said I should see his first movie before I worked with him to get a feel of his style and taste, so I got to see *Gone in 60 Seconds* as homework," Sena recalls. "Then I went off and worked with him for several weeks on *The Junkman*. When we were prepping this film, I didn't think anybody knew about the original, but everywhere we went, people knew and loved Halicki's film.

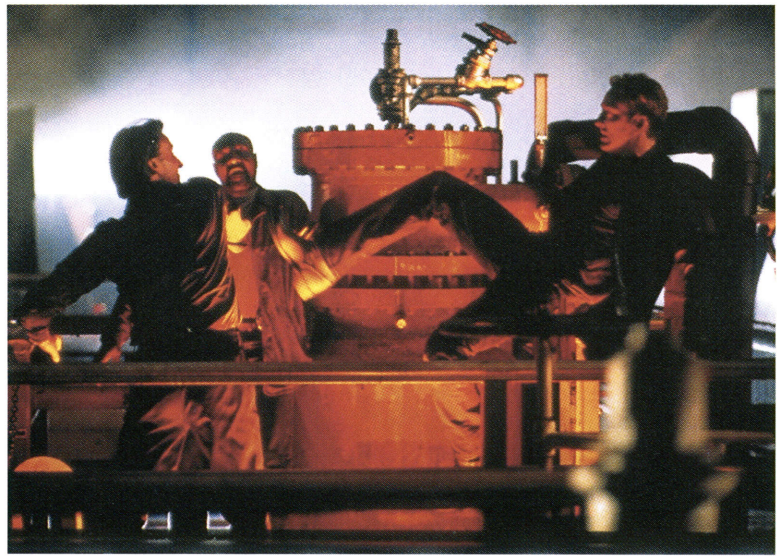
Photos courtesy of Touchstone Pictures and Jerry Bruckheimer, Inc.

Although we pay homage to it, this is a very different movie."

Sena began his career as a cameraman in the early 1980s and has shot more than 100 music videos. He's been honored with a variety of awards for his inventive cinematography, including the Eastman Kodak Certificate of Visual Excellence. In 1985, Sena added directing to his repertoire, working as a director and cinematographer on videos for Sting, David Bowie, Tina Turner, Bryan Adams, Steve Winwood, Fleetwood Mac and Janet Jackson, to name just a few. (He earned a Grammy Award for Best Long-Form Video for Jackson's *Rhythm Nation*.) Sena added feature films to his long list of accomplishments in 1993, directing the critically acclaimed thriller *Kalifornia*, which starred David Duchovny, Juliette Lewis and Brad Pitt.

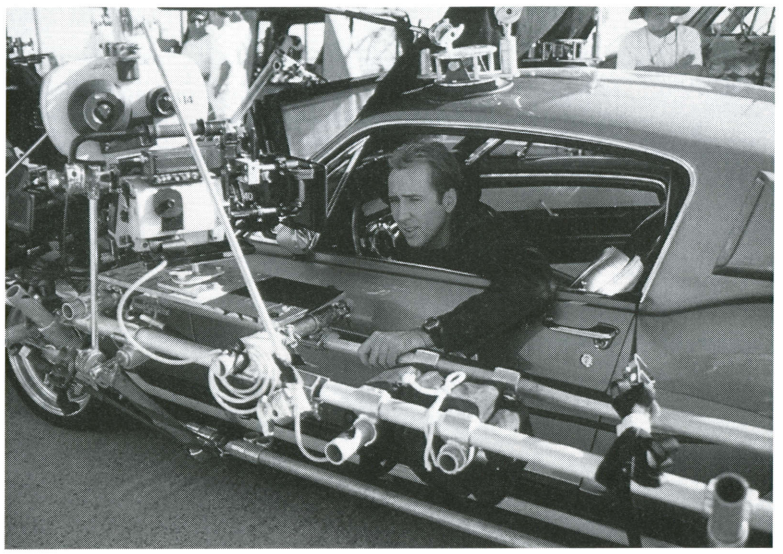
To bring *Gone in 60 Seconds* to the screen, Sena turned to cinematographer Paul Cameron, a longtime collaborator. Born in Montreal and raised in New York, Cameron took classes in the film department at State University of New York-Purchase. He began his career shooting music videos, segueing rather quickly into commercials, and became one of the early signatories of Dattner & Associates. Sena and Cameron teamed up for the first time to cover the 1994 Winter Olympics in Norway. "It was quite ironic," recalls Cameron. "I was walking down the street one day, and I saw a theater marquee for *Kalifornia*. I went in on a whim and was absolutely blown away. The following day, my agent called and asked if I wanted to go to Norway for few weeks to cover the Olympics with Dominic Sena." That collaboration began a fruitful and productive working relationship that has lasted more than six years.

In addition to videos for David Bowie, Billy Joel, Janet Jackson and Puff Daddy, Cameron has



Opposite: Crackerjack car thief Randall "Memphis" Raines (Nicolas Cage) takes the wheel. This page, top to bottom: Raines draws closer to Sara "Sway" Wayland; leaps into action against some hard-nosed foes; and consults with car aficionado Otto Halliwell (Robert Duvall). Assessing the film's vibrant, colorful look, cinematographer Paul Cameron notes that "a lot of people have been doing a desaturated look recently, and I thought it would be interested to go against the stream and see what we could do with some really saturated colors."

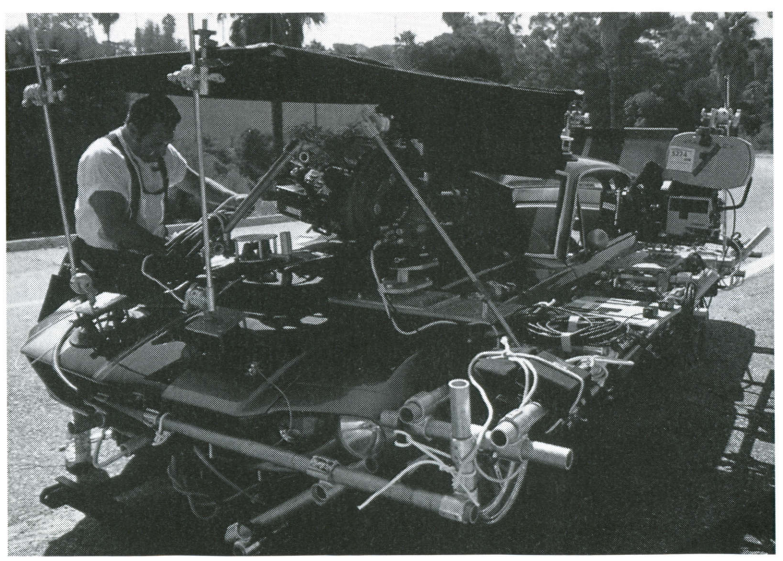
Pedal to the Metal



Right: Cage grips an elaborate car rig as he prepares to do some stunt driving. Below: A wider view of the rig, which helped the filmmakers capture a variety of angles.

photographed the pilot episodes of *Michael Hayes* for CBS and *Relativity* for ABC, as well as *Chantilly Lace* and *Parallel Lives* for Showtime. Cameron also won a Silver Clio for his work on a series of Healthnet commercials and an Emmy for NBC's Summer Olympics campaign. In the feature arena, Cameron has photographed the darkly humorous independent film *The Last Supper,* starring Cameron Diaz and Bill Paxton. "Paul is very passionate about what he does, which is crucial," Sena says. "I get excited about going to work every day, and I want to know that the guy who is shooting for me is as excited as I am when he looks through the viewfinder at a good shot. It's so damn hard to make a movie, you want to know that the person there with you is as passionate as you are."

Sena and Cameron's version of *Gone in 60 Seconds* revolves around Randall "Memphis" Raines (Nicolas Cage). Formerly one of the best car thieves alive, Raines has given up the trade to lead a straight life. After an ominous visit from an old friend, Memphis finds that he has no choice but to return to what he does best — stealing cars — in order to save his brother, Kip (Giovanni Ribisi). In one night, Memphis and his crew must pull off the ultimate car heist and steal 50 cars.



The look

"The most important thing was to keep it very real," says Cameron of the film's style. "Because it has to do with the underworld of car thieves in California's Long Beach and San Pedro areas, we began gravitating toward an 'industrial' look — a world of sodium-vapor, mercury-halide and fluorescent sources. We tried to stay grounded in that reality, and we utilized a lot of practicals."

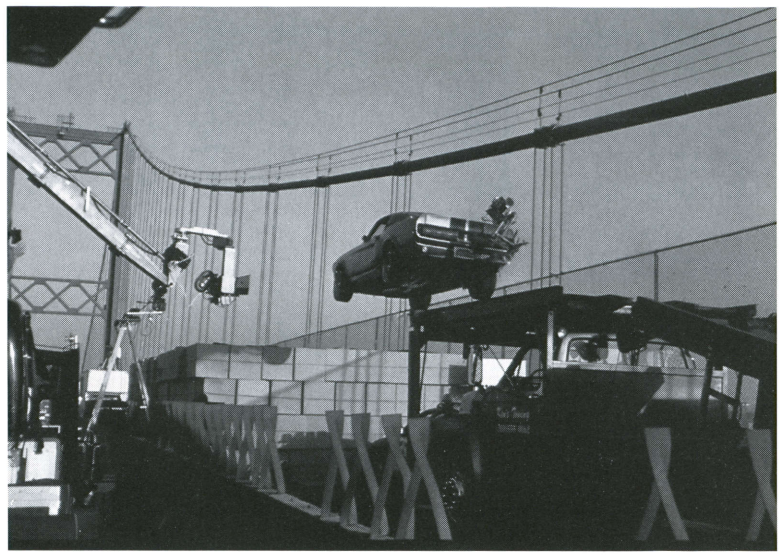
"In most films, when you're in a location with a lot of sodium and mercury sources around, you try to take them out," comments Cameron's gaffer, Jeff Murrell (*Men in Black, Get Shorty*). "But we decided to use those sources to our advantage and even enhance that look with our own lighting. In addition to putting up several sodium and mercury practicals wherever they were required, we created a gel pack that would emulate that look on either HMI or tungsten sources to support the practicals. In testing, we went through dozens of different color combinations before we settled on the ones that were just right. For the sodium-vapor look, we found that Lee's Apricot [#147], combined with Rosco Cal Color 15 or 30 Yellow [4515 or 4530] on tungsten lamps, matched the look identically on film. For the mercury-vapor look, we'd use a combination of 3/4 Plus Green and Cal Color 30 Blue [4230] on tungsten sources. For HMI sources, which were already blue, we'd add the Full Plus Green and Cal Color 15 Blue [4215].

"The nice thing about the Cal Color series is that if you get close to the look you want in testing, you can easily dial it in mathematically," he continues. "If I saw that we'd gotten very close to the sodium look but it was a bit too yellow, I just stepped down a notch in the Cal Color series and didn't have to worry about affecting the other wavelengths of light and biasing the overall color in

any unpredictable ways. It's really a very cool system."

The gaffer cited Cameron's bold use of color as one of the film's distinguishing features. "Paul used an extremely wide variety of colors at every location. Our main palette was the sodium and mercury look, but we also used an Old Steel Blue gel (Lee #725) at a power-plant location, which had just the right amount of gray in it to get the metallic look Paul wanted. We also pulled out a Summer Blue (Lee #140) at a house in Malibu for the exteriors, which created a nice, vibrant look that was slightly different. We also turned to some really saturated reds, yellows and greens at various locations. One great tool we used on this show was the Kodak PreView System; it allowed us the freedom to make some spur-of-the-moment color changes on set, and to know exactly what they were going to look like on film before we shot the scene. The PreView System takes out the guesswork."

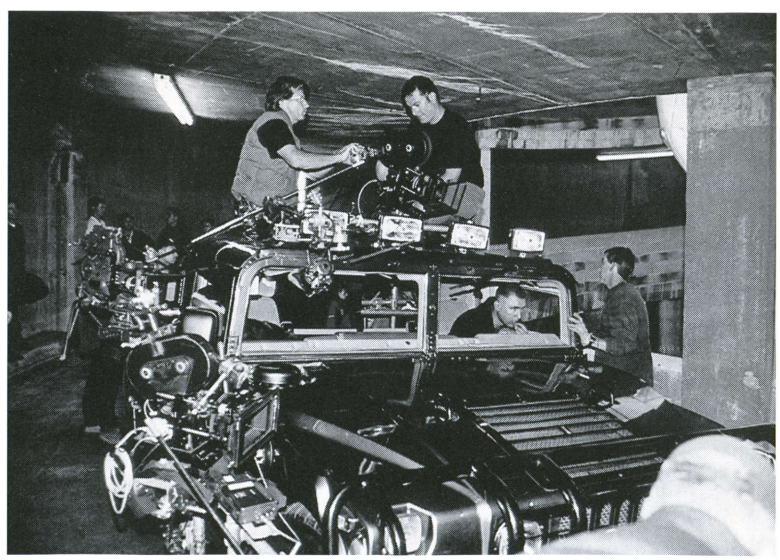
Sena confirms that the PreView System brought color timing to a new level. "Usually, you're relegated to primitive communication with the lab — 'a little warmer,' or 'make it green' — but far too often, that's not enough to get the look we're going for, especially in a situation like this, when what we're doing is rather unorthodox. The timer would be looking at the image and saying, 'Wait a minute, those faces aren't supposed to be green. I should dial it this way and take the color out of it.' With the PreView System, we were able to send them an example of exactly what we wanted that shot to look like: 'Yes, those faces *are* green; match this print.' Also, when you're mixing so many colors on the set, it's very easy for your eye to get biased one way or the other, and to misjudge how a particular area is going to look on film. Using the prints pretty much eliminates the surprises in dailies."



Left: Several cameras were deployed to capture this hair-raising car jump. Below: Crew members assemble another elaborate, camera-laden car rig.

Because most of the picture unfolds in garages and warehouses ("places we've all seen a million times before," Sena says), the director decided to lend the locations a unique look by playing with color. "One of the first things I latched onto was a real hard use of color," he notes. "A lot of people have been doing a desaturated look recently, and I thought it would be interesting to go against the stream and see what we could do with some really saturated colors. I wanted to get in there and play with fluorescents and mercury vapors — let this room be yellow, the room in the background be green, and the lights outside be orange instead of the usual blue! I started researching that kind of look, and any time I found an image in a magazine, I'd save it. I then went to Paul and said, 'Here, this is my idea, what do you think?' He replied, 'Yeah, let's do it.'"

After testing colors quite a bit in preproduction, Sena and Cameron chose to limit the film's overall color palette primarily to sodium-yellow and mercury-blue, and let the story's individual locations dictate more saturated accents. In the bar owned by Sara "Sway" Wayland (Angelina Jolie), that accent choice was a deeply saturated blue, and in Kip's house, the choice was a vivid primary red.



Pedal to the Metal

Right: A row of overhead fixtures adds the appropriate ambience to the film's warehouse-type garage set, which featured windows that had ostensibly been turned opaque by years of dirt and grime. Below: Sena (left) and producer Jerry "Mr. Blockbuster" Bruckheimer consult on location. Bottom: Paul Cameron with his trusty Panavision camera.

The big picture

When it came time to select a proscenium through which to tell the story of the Raines brothers, Sena asserts that he had to "think about it for all of about three seconds before I decided to go anamorphic. I just love the way the 2.35:1 image looks. When I was doing videos, I would always be doing them 1.85:1, at least. Even on commercials, I would try to talk [the clients and agencies] into shooting a wider format whenever I could. I shot *Kalifornia* in Super 35 because I knew the film was going to be a run-and-gun, low-budget production. There would be no going back once we shot at each of the locations.

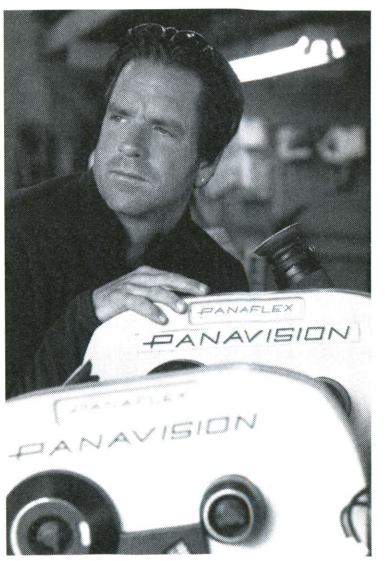
"With anamorphic, there can be a lot more problems that might require a reshoot or additional coverage: a hair in the gate pretty much means that the shot is gone, and the focus is a lot tougher," he continues. "But for *Gone in 60 Seconds,* I knew we were going to have a bit more breathing room. Actually, I was a little tentative about telling the studio that I wanted to go anamorphic, but when I did, they just said, 'Sure. What else would you shoot?' I didn't really stop to think that for most of the people who make movies with Jerry Bruckheimer, it's pretty much a given that they're going to shoot anamorphic!"

Jimmy Muro, the A-camera and Steadicam operator on *Gone in 60 Seconds*, has also worked with Oliver Stone (*Any Given Sunday*), James Cameron (*Titanic*) and Michael Mann (*Heat*), among others. "Every time I start an anamorphic show, I always have a lengthy conversation with the [director and cinematographer], asking, 'Are you sure you want to do this?' It was especially important to ask that question on this show, since we were going to shoot mostly at night and put the camera in some cramped spaces, like under a dashboard. Why would you want a huge lens that needs a great deal of light when you can get the same format in Super 35? Let's face it: with Super 35, you get better depth of field and the gear is smaller.

"I do love anamorphic, though," Muro enthuses. "I love the look of the image, and if the production is willing to accept the challenge, like this one did, then we go for it. It does take a while to get used to the format, though — in our first week of shooting, we were doing a lot of 180mm close-ups, but by the final week of shooting, most of our close-ups were [75mm to 100mm], so you can see the actors in addition to what is going on beyond them in the frame. It really adds depth to the image. Also, I absolutely love the look of the [Panavision] C-Series lenses we used; even though they breathe a little bit, they have beautiful, beautiful flares."

Cameron notes that first assistant cameraman Danny Gonzales thoroughly tested the Panavision lenses during preproduction, a task that proved to be a saving grace. "He learned all of the intricacies about these lenses that you can imagine. He not only thoroughly tested them in prep to get the best possible set, but he also learned the optics inside and out. We would be shooting a close-up, and he would be able to say that the B-camera 100mm would be a better choice for the focus range and frame size because the breathing was minimized at that focal area.

"Of course, we read all the articles we could get our hands on regarding anamorphic shooting, and developed our own philosophies on how to best maximize the optical qualities of these lenses," the cinematographer continues. "We had both the C-series and E-series lenses on this show. I was shooting the night exteriors at about a T-2.8/3.2 on the C-series and at more of a T-5.6/8 for day exteriors. It was an extreme challenge to not only work in anamorphic, but also to always work with multiple camera setups. I



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Pedal to the Metal

Otto Halliwell stands amid the environs of a true car junkie. A total of 180 12-light Maxi-Brutes surrounded the exterior of the garage set.

would have a Steadicam, a 40mm on a crane and a 180mm on a dolly, all running at the same time, so we were lighting and composing for everything at once. That means we often made slight compromises for one angle or the other, but on a film of this scale, you've got to get the shots. I also ended up taking more risks with my lighting to make sure that the masters look good. The overall approach to this film has been somewhere between the commercial, guerrilla and big-budget-feature concepts of filmmaking."

Commercial savvy

"This film has been done in much more of a 'commercial' style than a typical feature," affirms key grip Scott Robinson (*L.A. Confidential, Terminator 2: Judgment Day*), "but it's a choice that worked out well. Dominic is very comfortable in that style, and most of my guys have done a lot of commercials, so our skills are honed in that department as well. We'd often break off into splinter units, where we'd simultaneously do a crane shot, make a couple of dolly shots and have a guy working with Jimmy Muro on Steadicam. Meanwhile, I had guys working with lighting and doing car mounts. It was an eclectic approach; one minute we were in feature mode and setting up through full rehearsals, but from that point on it would diversify into three different segments. It was like playing jazz — Dominic set that beat, and we'd go with it.

"It's also a bit tougher with anamorphic lenses to do multiple mounts and multiple cameras without each one getting into the other's shot or seeing a lamp somewhere," Robinson observes. "We were always looking for more exciting places to put the camera. I'd be running a Technocrane off of a Titan, more often than not just to get the range of movement we were looking for. This show required a bit wider thinking than normal features, but it was a blast."

When asked to elaborate on his commercial-style approach to filmmaking, Sena comments, "I suspect that if you look at Tony or Ridley Scott or one of those guys who do commercials quite a bit, our approach isn't going to be much different. I don't subscribe to the single-camera approach at all, unless we're doing a huge Steadicam shot or something where it's just impossible to get other cameras in there. However, to be honest, I haven't been around that many other features. The filmmakers I do know, like David Fincher, work in the same kind of style. I knew I wanted to go with multiple-camera setups from the outset for a number of reasons, but one of the foremost was because great performances are sometimes very hard to re-create. If you get it, you get it, and there's no going back. If we've got that moment covered in several angles, then we move on; I'm not stuck trying to replicate that same feeling three or four more times half a day later in other setups. But at the same time, I'm not going crazy with the camera. If we've got a dialogue scene or a shot of a guy reading the newspaper, I'm not spiraling all over the place with the camera to cover that. That way, when you do unleash the camera on an action sequence, the audience appreciates it more than [they would] if you've been swinging it around for two hours."

"Dominic is an extreme visualist," asserts Cameron. "He has very high photographic expectations. On another production, you might sacrifice a throwaway shot in order to keep the project moving, but with Dominic, every shot had to count. That, in addition to multiple-camera setups, was really a challenge, but I'm very proud of the result." The cinematographer chose Eastman Kodak's Vision 500T 5279, rated at 400 ISO for a little extra exposure, for nighttime work, and Vision 200T 5274 for his daytime sequences. Although a handful of show prints will be struck

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Pedal to the Metal

using the Technicolor Dye Transfer printing process, the majority of the final prints will be on Kodak's Vision Premiere (2393) stock.

Shifting into high gear

A film about a band of car thieves is, of course, going to feature a number of exciting chases. Although the production did not attempt to re-create the 40-minute chase of its predecessor, Gone in 60 Seconds does feature its share of high-speed pursuits — and a climactic nine-minute chase that will be aiming for the record books.

Sena was faced with a blank slate on which to design the picture's final high-speed pursuit, in which Memphis is chased by Detective Roland Castlebeck (Delroy Lindo). For one thing, the original script set the chase in Boston, and Sena had relocated the story to Southern California. "I wanted to construct the sequence a bit differently than most chases in films," he explains. "It was originally written for a lot of freeway chasing, but when you're on the freeway, your pursuers are always behind you, everybody is going the same way, and it can get pretty boring. I wanted to take the audience through the various environments of Long Beach and San Pedro and change those environments during the chase to add variety to the sequence.

"Some parts of the sequence are about careful maneuvering through tightly congested areas, and other parts are about all-out, 140-mile-per-hour driving. I looked closely at the great film chases of the past, like those in Bullitt, The French Connection, To Live and Die in L.A. and Ronin, to make sure I wasn't rehashing old ground. Of course, every chase is going to have its share of 180s and crash-ups, but I wanted to make this one as original as I could — which was certainly challenging, because those four films set the bar pretty high."

In what was perhaps the most unorthodox move of the production, the filmmakers decided not only to shoot the final chase as a free-driving sequence (meaning little or no process or tow work), but also to place Cage at the wheel. This meant that the actor would be doing the majority of his own stunt driving with several cameras and lighting mounted on the car. "You can always tell when it's a stunt driver or a double doing the hairy stuff," Sena laments. "When you put the lead actor in a parking lot and have grips shake the car, while electricians are running alongside with lights to make it seem as if the car is actually moving, it all comes off very flat and fake. For a movie that has a car chase as a sub-element, that's fine, but this

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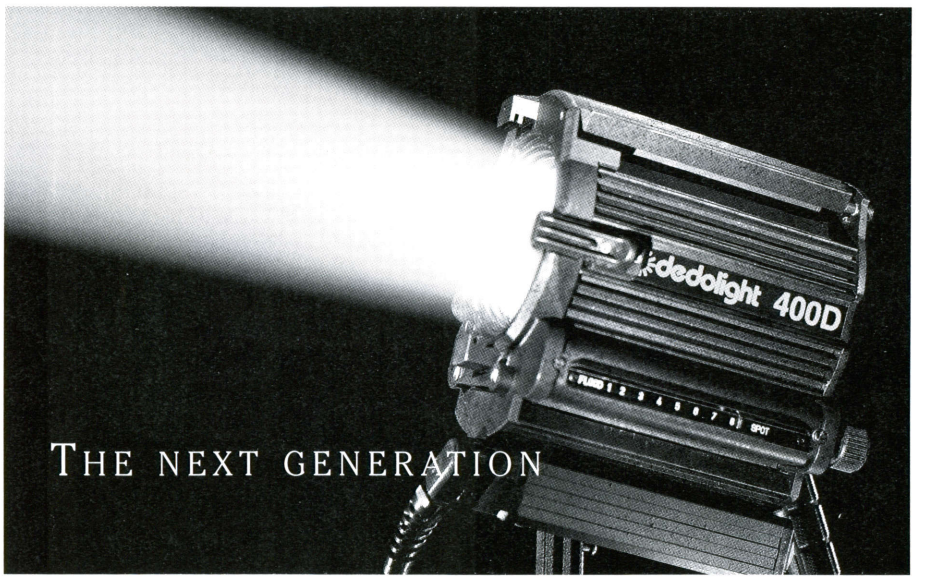

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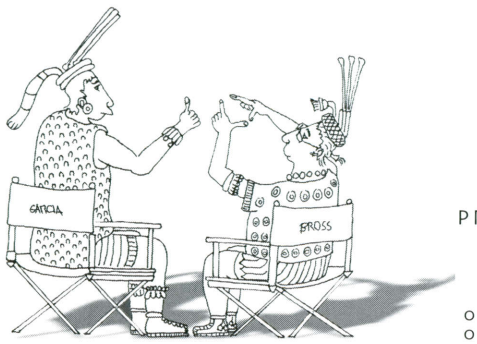

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Pedal to the Metal

movie is *about* cars. It's about driving and chases, and it was absolutely imperative to make that final sequence as real as possible."

During one of Sena's early discussions with Cage, the actor revealed that he loves cars and is a good driver. "It turns out that he's a *great* driver, and with a little work he became an *amazing* driver. We sent all of the actors to high-performance driving schools before we started shooting, and we were extremely careful during shooting. There were certainly times when stunt drivers did the work, such as a shot requiring a car to fly into the air and crash down on the highway. But otherwise, it's Nick at the wheel.

"While setting up for each shot," Sena explains, "Nick would first ride along with the stunt driver and go through the action at one-quarter speed, then at half speed, and finally at full speed. Then Nick would try it alone, without any other cars involved, and he would practice the move several times. When he was comfortable, we would bring in the other drivers and do a few dry runs before we shot a take. It was all a process of building up to the action and finessing it to make it all as exciting as possible, and everybody was extremely careful. Because we put Nick behind the wheel, you can really feel that tension when you're watching the scene."

According to Cameron, there were usually two or three cameras rigged to the cars, in addition to lights. He credits Robinson with designing rigs that hugged the vehicles, avoiding the hazard of wind drag. Ordinarily, if a picture vehicle is being towed, lamps can be easily rigged on the towing car or on the trailer carrying the picture car to key the actors inside. If the towing vehicle does not provide power, a small generator can either be loaded onboard or towed along. However, with a free-driving picture car, the only power source available is the

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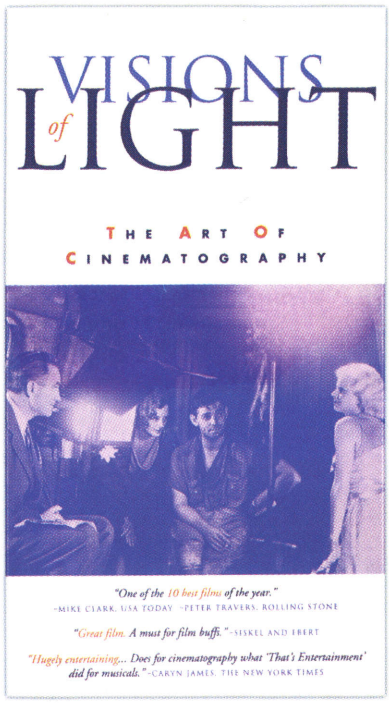

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car's own 12-volt system. Gaffer Jeff Murrell cites the Lightning Strikes Soft Source 3.3K as his salvation on these sequences. "The 3.3K Soft Source is an amazing little unit," he states. "It's daylight with a proprietary short-arc lamp, so it comes up to speed instantly. There is no warmup time with the fixture, and that was crucial for us on this show, because we designed a 120-volt DC power pack to run the 3.3K while it was riding around on the car.

"Because of the limited power source available to us off a battery pack, we had to save the light between every take," he continues. "With normal HMIs, when you start and stop them, it takes time for them to get back up to speed; sometimes they don't hot restrike. These 3.3Ks immediately strike up and are at color temperature right off the bat. That saves time and power. In addition, they pack a strong punch without being overly sourcey. We were able to bring in Nick to a range where the backgrounds were holding and it still looked very natural."

In addition to the careful steps taken for the safety of the actors and drivers, the crew had to work hard to get the coverage necessary to assemble the final chase. Typically, Cage would drive through a sequence with two or three cameras covering him in the car. Then Eddie Yansick, Cage's stunt driver, would drive a POV car (permanently rigged for quick placement of cameras) with two or three more cameras on it through the same action, while the production crew rigged the chasing car. The filmmakers would then send the chase car through the sequence to get that coverage. In all, it took three weeks of principal photography and an additional week of second-unit photography to assemble the nine-minute chase.

"We had to get the footage with Nick on a daily basis," recalls Cameron. "It was the only way we were going to get all of the pieces we

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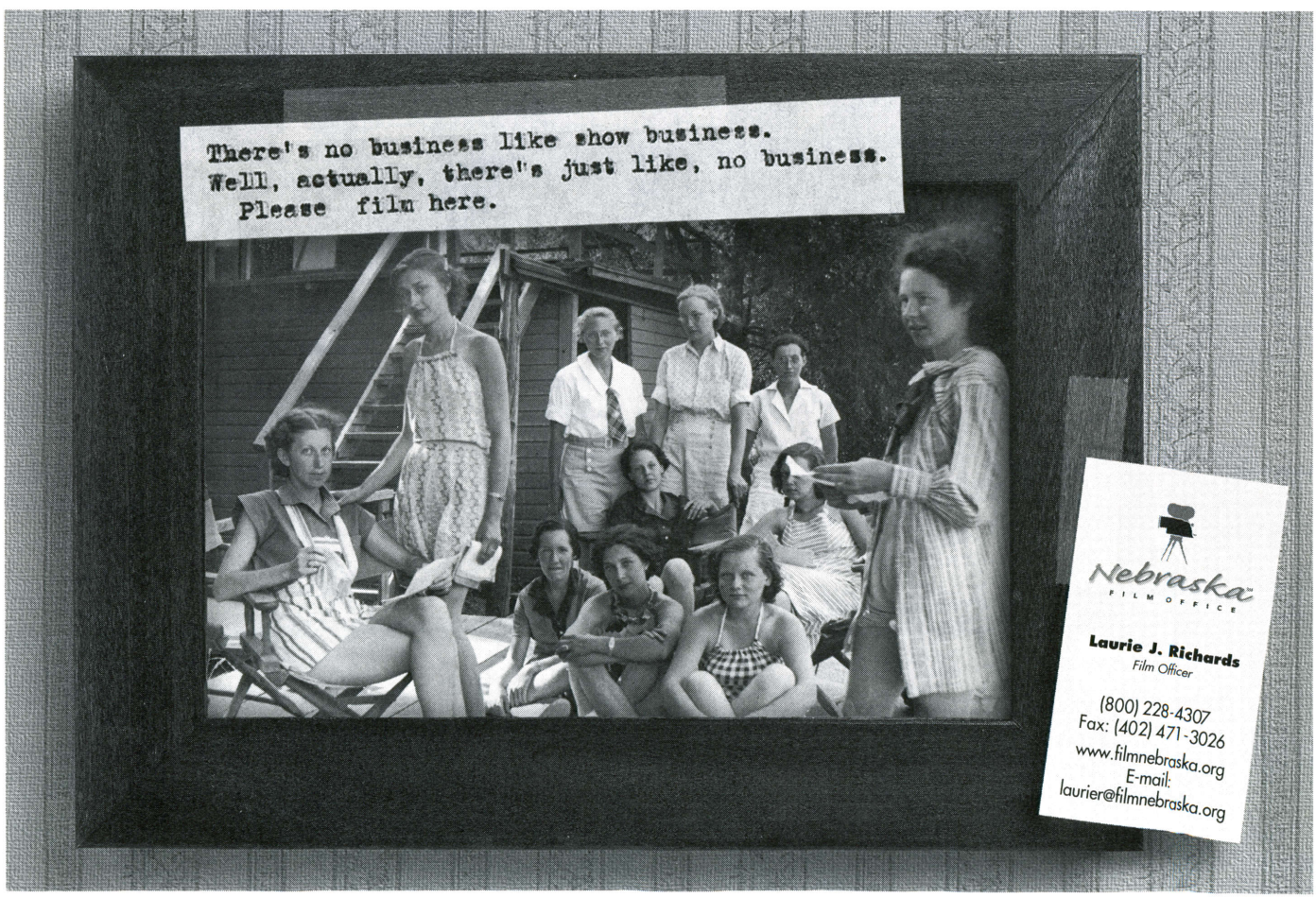
Kip (Giovanni Ribisi) ponders what he's wrought. In detailing his approach to the film's visuals, Cameron notes, "I wanted to get in there and play with fluorescents and mercury vapors." After testing colors quite a bit in preproduction, the filmmakers chose to limit the overall color palette primarily to sodium-yellow and mercury-blue, and let the individual locations dictate more saturated accents, which were often achieved with Rosco Cal Color gels.

needed for the scene. The sequence takes place in the early morning, just as the sun is coming up, but we shot at every conceivable time of day: high noon, evening, dusk, in fog and in bright sun! We didn't have much choice — if we had tried to shoot the whole sequence at dawn or magic hour, we'd still be out there shooting it now! We therefore decided early on that we would digitally color-time that whole sequence.

"I did extensive testing in prep on the look we wanted for the sequence," the cinematographer continues. "Working with various strengths of tobacco and chocolate filters, I found the look we wanted, then took it in to Bob Kaiser, our colorist at Technicolor. I knew we were going to be shooting this sequence as fast as possible and under a variety of conditions, and I didn't want to have to worry about filtration on the cameras, so we dialed in a look in prep and shot the whole sequence clean during production. In digital timing with [colorist] Stefan Sonnenfeld at Company 3, we were able to tweak all of the various lighting conditions into the original look I wanted. The power of digital correction is just endless; we shot with blown-out skies, heavy clouds, fog and harsh, high-noon light. If we'd timed all of that in the lab, there's no way we could have gotten it to match in contrast and color, but we dialed it all in just fine digitally."

Sena says that working in commercials has given him different expectations about color timing. "I've been spoiled," he says frankly. "[On commercials], I'm used to going into a telecine suite and having incredible power with my color correction. I can say, 'Okay, let's boost those highlights and crush those blacks, and let's take that orange in the background and make it a bit pinker, but leave the flesh tones



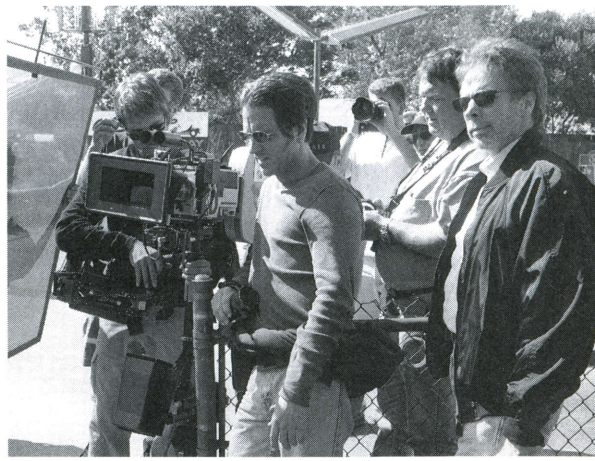
alone.' You get into a Hazeltine suite, and the timer says, 'Do you want it darker or lighter?' [Laughs.] It's painful! They always do the best job they can, but the future of color correction is a digital all the way."

Highlighting classic cars

In order to accomplish their "mission impossible," the Raines brothers turn to car aficionado and expert Otto Halliwell (Robert Duvall), whose garage was one of the few sets that were built on stage for the production. The set consisted of a large, warehouse-type garage split into two sections. The warehouse was ringed with windows that had ostensibly been turned opaque by years of dirt and grime. Cameron designed a lighting rig consisting of a double-tiered box truss, one above the other, on two sides of the set just outside the windows. On each set of trusses, he hung 45 12-Light Maxi-Brutes, which were all custom-snooted to fire through just one window. In all, 180 12-light Maxis surrounded the exterior of the set.

Because the windows already had a warm art treatment on them, Cameron and gaffer Murrell didn't have to reach far to achieve their chocolate interior-day look. Each of the 12-light Maxis was covered with a cut of ½ CTS. Inside the set, Cameron keyed the actors with a combination of Kino Flo Wall-o-Lites and Image 80s, all gelled with ¾ CTS. To add a feeling of sunlight from the windows, Cameron used an additional 12-light Maxi bounced into silver lamé on the garage floor, and then through a sheet of ½ White Diffusion (250) to provide a bit of uplight on the actors.

The majority of the film's day sequences are biased to Cameron's chocolate look, whereas most of the night sequences lean toward the blue-green mercury or sodium feel. Because the film deals with so many extraordinary cars, Cameron wanted to find a way to incorporate classic, commercial car lighting to show off the beauty of each vehicle, while at the same time staying true to the story. To do this, he often flew a 20' x 60' muslin flat 20-30 feet off the ground above the cars and lit the



Cameron (left) and Bruckheimer get down to business.

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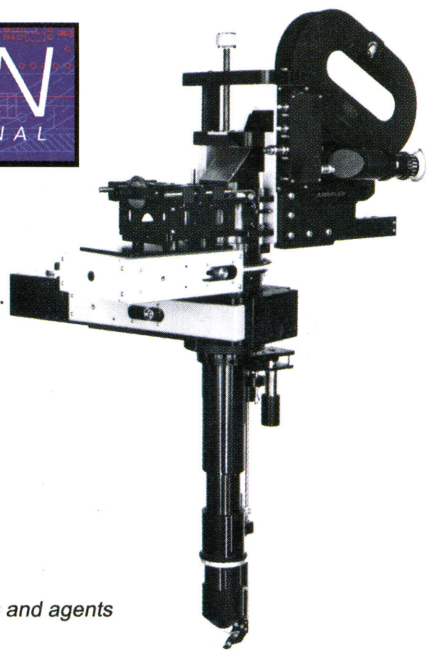

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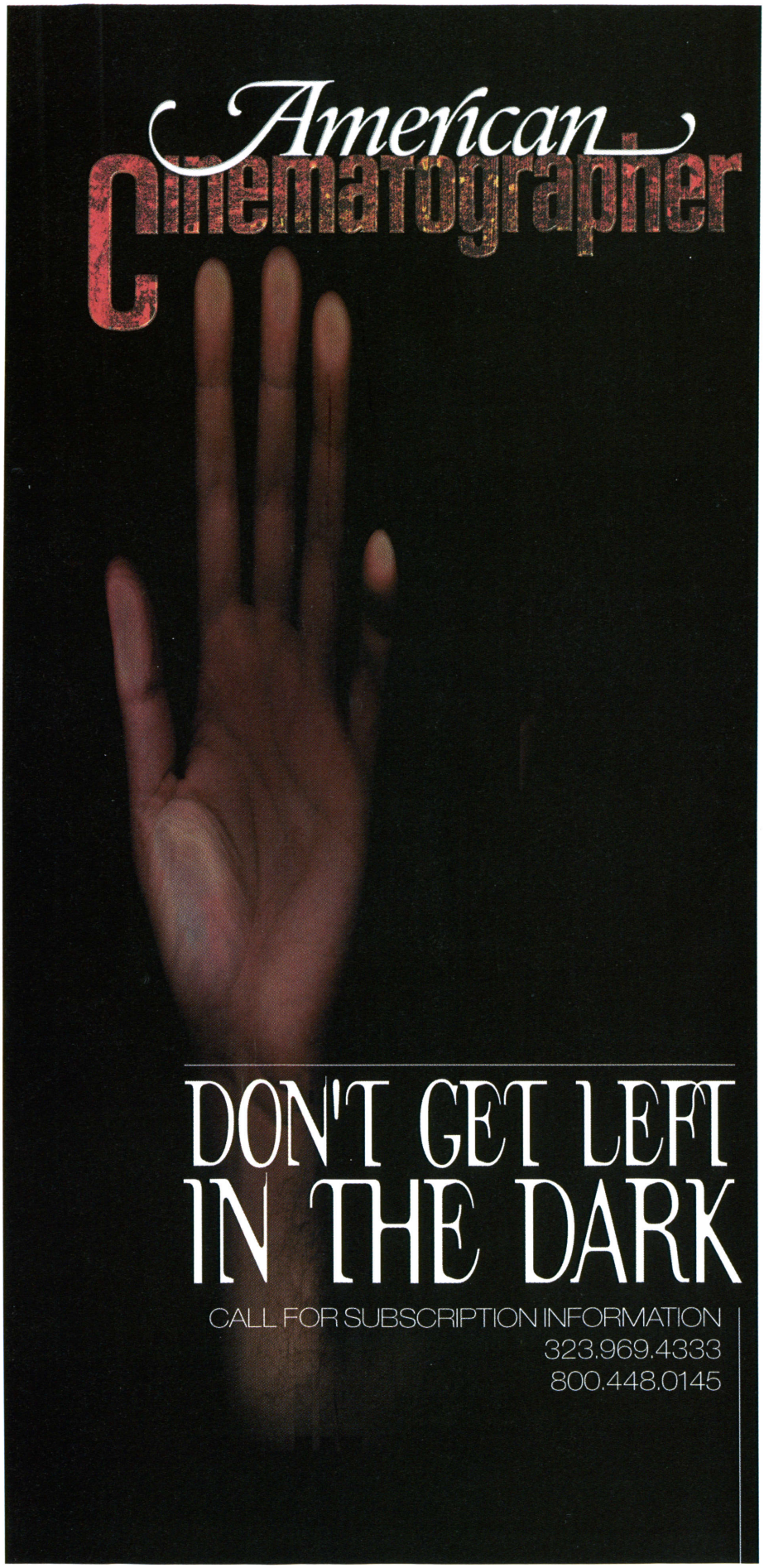

Pedal to the Metal

muslin from the ground with a 12K PAR or a 10K Xenon from just beyond the frame. These sources were often colored with the Plus Green and Cal Color Blue combination to create the mercury-vapor feel.

The concept of a large, powerful source just beyond the frame is a strong motif that runs throughout the picture. "Paul told me in the beginning that if we don't have a skip angle somewhere in the frame, we're missing something," recalls Murrell. "We used a lot of Xenons during both day and night scenes to get that skip angle from somewhere just out of frame, and add that hard kick on the edge of things."

"We worked a lot with those hot kicks and flares," Cameron confirms. "Over the years, I've developed a specific lighting style, especially for day or night exteriors — I tend to put powerful sources, like a 10K Xenon, right at the edge of the frame in the background, pointing almost directly down the lens, to create a super-hot edge that's pretty off the scale stop-wise. That technique always puts you in danger of getting some violent flares, but if you handle it just right it adds tremendous depth to the image.

"Overall, the film is very contrasty," Cameron concludes. "I don't think I ever used any fill sources at all. As a matter of fact, when we were shooting some inserts toward the end of the shoot, I asked Jeff [Murrell] for a bit of fill, and he nearly had a heart attack! He said, 'My God! We've gone the whole picture with actors' faces in pitch blackness with no fill, and *now* you wanna fill *this*?!' He just shook his head and laughed at me! But I'm very proud of the look of the film; it's all about contrast and edginess. Dominic pushed me to go bolder with the visuals, and the result is a film that certainly stands up to be noticed." ■

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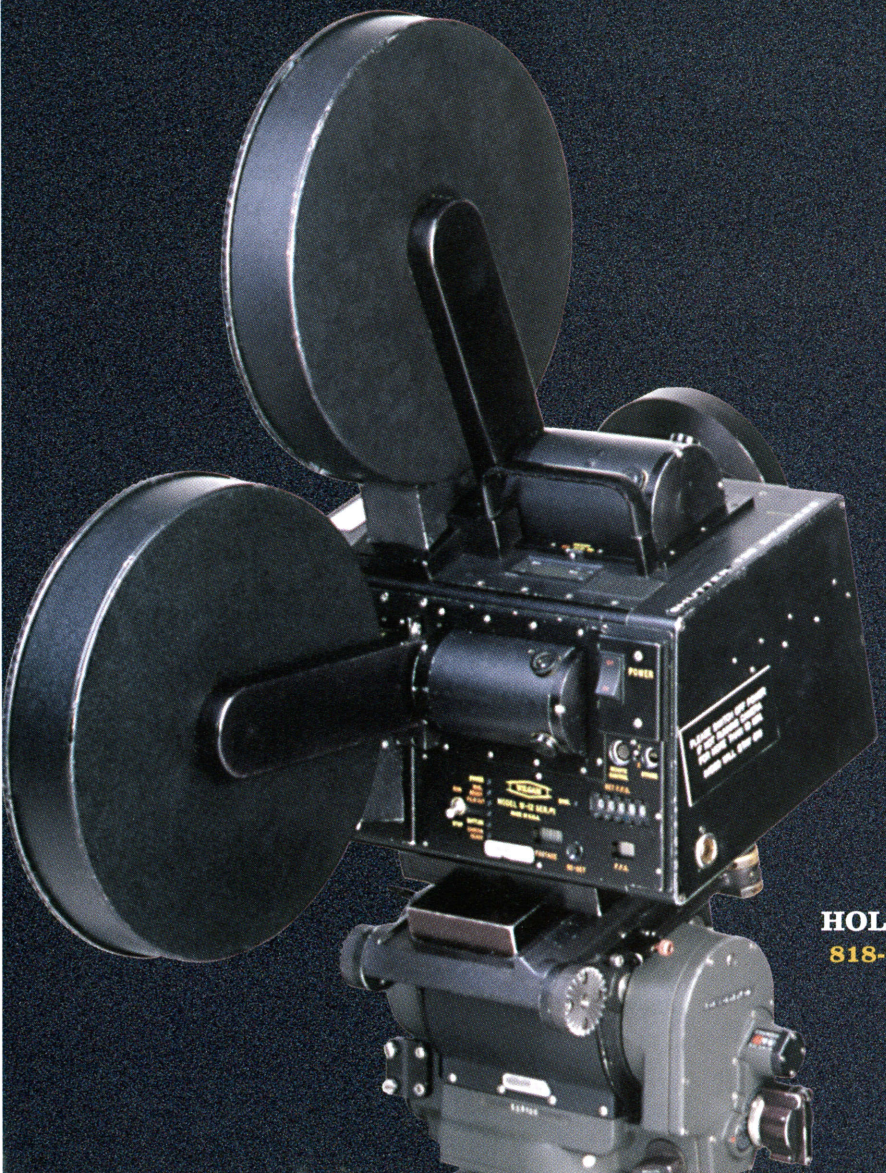

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Secret Agent Man

Cinematographer Jeffrey Kimball, ASC helps director John Woo achieve his trademark hyperkinetic visual style on *Mission: Impossible 2*.

by Eric Rudolph

Unit photography by Jasin Boland

In *Mission: Impossible 2*, one of this summer's first big action movies, Tom Cruise reprises his gadget-laden, two-fisted role as daring, resourceful IMF agent Ethan Hunt. The star also pulled no punches as the film's co-producer, enlisting esteemed action master John Woo (*Broken Arrow, Face/Off*) as director, Robert Towne (*Chinatown*) as screenwriter, and Jeffrey L. Kimball, ASC (*Top Gun, Stigmata*) as cinematographer. With Thandie Newton and Anthony Hopkins filling out the cast, *M:I-2* seems sure to provide some diverting warm-weather thrills.

M:I-2 finds Hunt trying to stop terrorists from releasing a lethal designer virus onto an unsuspecting population. Most of the filming for the bigger-than-life picture took place in and around Sydney, Australia, from May to September of 1999. Other location filming and Hollywood studio work stretched the schedule into December.

Woo had distinct ideas about the look of this sequel, and he set out to make a spy film with a unique visual style. "We wanted to avoid the cold look of most spy movies, and [the look] of [Brian De Palma's] *Mission: Impossible*," says Woo. "The action and effects in *M:I-2* are fairly basic, but our challenge was to make the film emotional, passionate and romantic. It is, after all, a love story, and it stars Tom Cruise, who has tremendous charm."

The director had admired Kimball's cinematography on *Top Gun* and *Revenge*, noting that he is especially fond of the "smoky lighting" that's become one of the cameraman's stylistic hallmarks. Woo adds that Kimball also had a lot of experience shooting in the anamorphic format. The director says he is very pleased with the warm, romantic look Kimball achieved on *M:I-2*. "Jeff's lighting [on the film] is

Photos courtesy of Paramount Pictures.

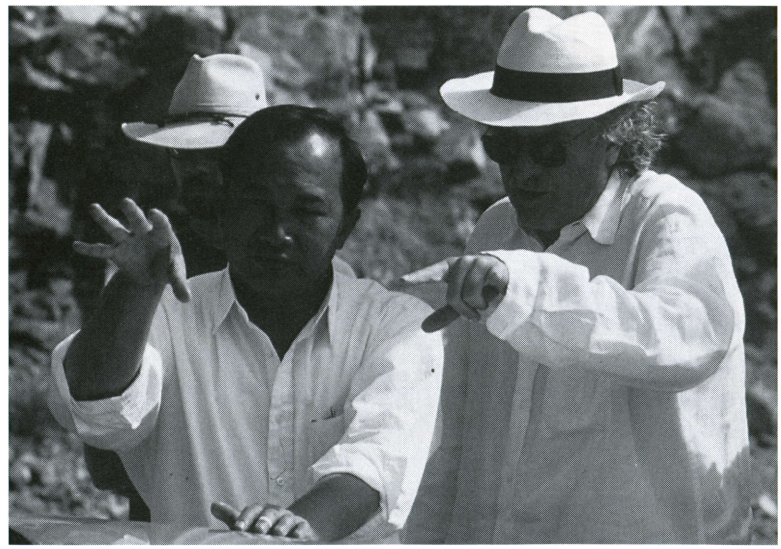
Opposite: IMF agent Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) kicks his motorcycle into high gear. Portions of this chase sequence were filmed with a Steadicam operated by Greg Lunsgard from another cycle. This page, top: Hunt attacks his mission with consummate stealth. Bottom: Woo (left) and Kimball block out the action for an upcoming take.

very elegant," he says. "*M:I-2* doesn't look like any of Jeff's previous films; it has its very own character."

According to the director, one of the cinematographer's primary contributions to the storytelling was his skill at lighting faces. "Jeff is very good at lighting actors in a way that strengthens the story structure and the characters," he says. "I feel the actors' eyes tell most of the story, and Jeff's lighting helped bring out the emotional moments we needed." For his part, Kimball says he does not take any particular approach to lighting eyes effectively. "Making the eyes or any [other feature] work well onscreen is a matter of simply interpreting the story with light, of bringing the appropriate mood to the story" with the tools at hand. "The essence of the story always dictates how I think any scene should be lit."

The warmth and patina of romance in *M:I-2* was achieved through the use of light, gels and some lens filtration. "I used a circle diffusion filter, various grads and an old Mitchell diffuser," Kimball recalls. "Whenever I can, however, I like to avoid filters and get the look I'm after with light." For that reason, he used a minimal amount of lens diffusion. "Thandie Newton looked great, and Tom Cruise never looked better. If you get Tom on the correct side of his face and just give him a key, he lights up beautifully, as does Thandie," Kimball observes. "To get a more romantic look, one with perhaps a bit of glossiness, I would give the actors a little 'kiss' on the side of the face — a ¾ backlight bounced off a piece of beadboard from behind the ear. That worked especially well on Tom."

For Kimball, the biggest challenge wasn't necessarily adding warmth to a spy film, but rather executing Woo's wild, moving-camera shots, which the director and others have referred to as a "ballet." This task was further complicated by the film's anamorphic format and Woo's fondness for wide lenses. "John's style is extremely difficult for a cameraman; the camera moves so



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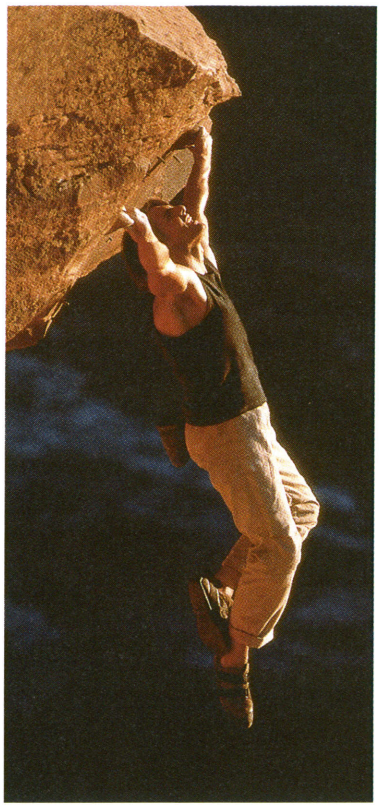

Right: Hunt, ever the adrenalin junkie, executes a tricky rock-climbing maneuver. Below: The crew deploys a telescoping Super Technocrane to capture shots for the climbing sequence.

much in almost every shot," Kimball says. "However, you still want to keep things looking as good as possible and maintain the style that you struck for yourself. The constant camera movement was definitely the hardest part." The cinematographer adds that first assistant cameraman Ken Nashino is "an excellent focus puller. We couldn't have done a film with this much camera movement without him."

According to Kimball, Woo planned his shots with storyboards but often varied considerably from the drawings on set. "The shots don't really go according to the boards," Kimball confirms. "John gets a pretty good idea of how he wants to edit the picture as he goes along, so things changed on set. We'd have a set rigged and ready, but we would still have to light to the specific shot John wanted on a particular day."

M:I-2's widescreen, wide-angle approach meant that "not much of the film was lit from the floor," Kimball notes. "Also, we were moving the camera around a lot and often going in circles." Thus, most light stands stayed on the truck for the run of the show. Working with a constantly moving camera meant that keeping lighting consistent became a very complex endeavor. Kimball explains, "The main challenge was to keep our star looking like a movie star — [and] it *is* Tom Cruise, whom you especially want to look good at all times." To achieve consistency, Kimball relied on dimmers, which were especially helpful on many of the wilder camera moves, including several 180-degree spins. "As someone's backlight became his front light, we would bring it up, bring down the new backlight, and so on, as much as we needed to keep the actor nicely lit all the way around," he explains.

Remote cranes, standard dollies and Steadicam rigs were used constantly, according to Kimball. "Super Technocranes were extremely useful because of the constant camera movement. On a typical shot, the Technocrane might come from very high and swoop into a close-up, then pull back rapidly as the actor performed some action. There might be a zoom in there as well. We also did complex moves with a dolly on mini-dance floors built with plywood, on which we would place five or six camera-move marks to help us efficiently execute compound moves. You can't just use dolly tracks for the types of intricate, moving shots we were doing."

Kimball describes his overall lighting style as "edgy and not particularly reality-based," which he thinks was well suited to *M:I-2*. "A good action-adventure picture should require some suspension of disbelief. *M:I-2* should be a pretty fun ride, and I think it is." His day interior lighting usually starts with big lights outside of windows, and he generally followed suit for the film's interiors. "I like to have that available-light feeling," Kimball explains.

"Because we did a lot of high-speed filming and were shooting in anamorphic, we tended to use larger lighting instruments to get a decent stop," he continues. "My preference is to use arc lights, but they don't really have them in Australia." (Kimball substituted 18K HMIs for arc lights on the portions of the film shot in Australia.) "A lot of people don't use arcs anymore," notes gaffer Dan Delgado, who began working with Kimball as a best boy on *Top Gun*. "The quality of the arc light is very nice — more natural, softer. It's a look that's a bit different, which Jeff

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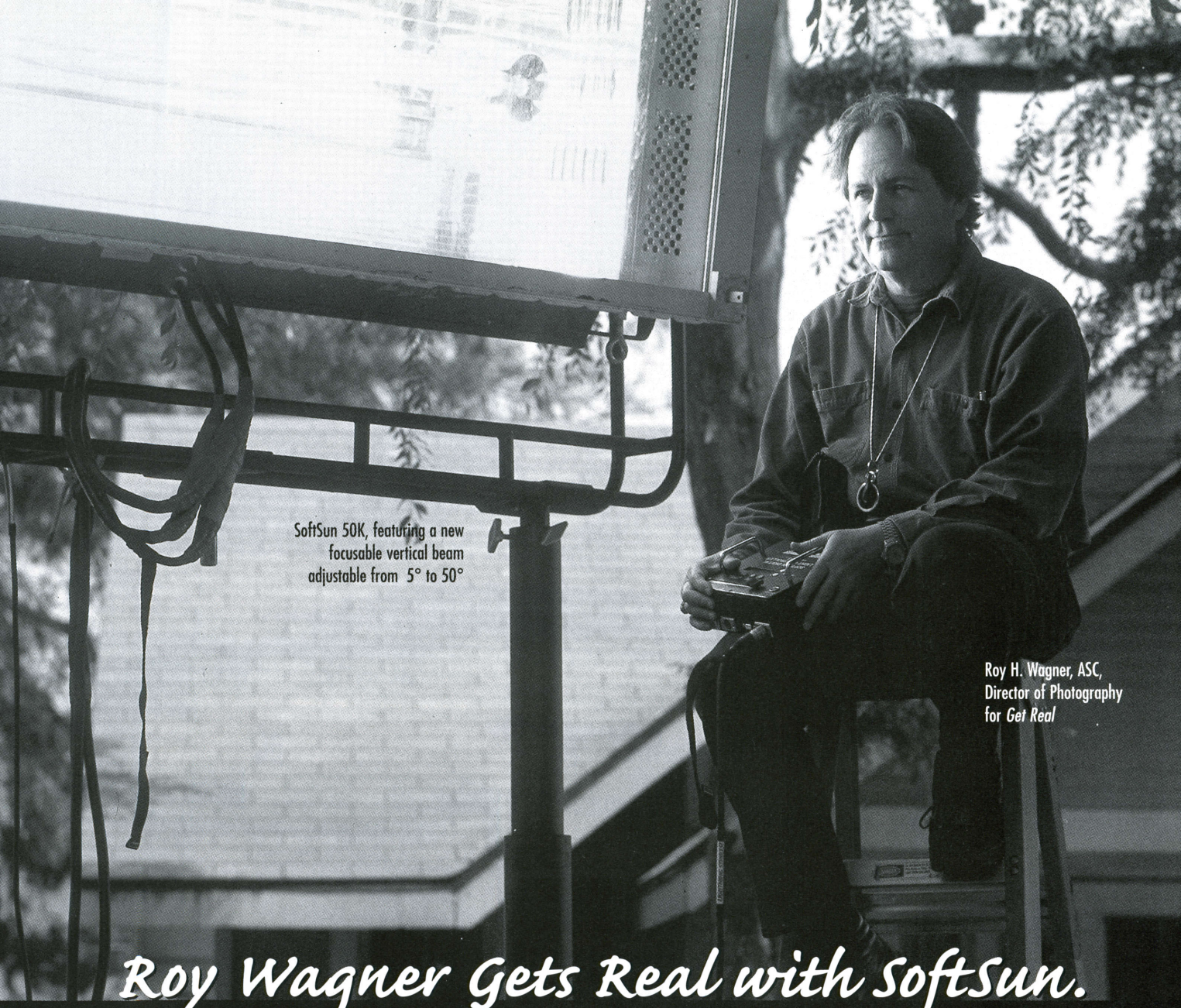
Top: Woo's penchant for explosive action is readily apparent as a flaming car goes airborne. Bottom: Lighting balloons tethered to cranes are used to illuminate an expansive exterior sequence.

tends to prefer." Delgado adds that smaller instruments, rather than reflectors or bounce cards, were normally used inside for fill when large lights were placed outside.

Kimball's use of smoke not only adds atmosphere and dramatically defines shafts of light, but also "helps to fill in the shadows," Delgado explains. "We didn't use smoke on all of the interiors on *M:I-2*, but we used it throughout the film." In one shadowy scene, Hunt witnesses an attempted robbery in a large bathroom while he is at a party in Spain. "That's where Tom and Thandie meet — she's in a bathtub," explains Kimball. "It was an interior room at night, so of course it's all artificial light, and we added a lot of candles. We did our best to make it feel very romantic. We built a big softbox from foamcore and set it up at about a 45-degree angle as a backlight over the tub. In keeping with my desire to always use an available-light look, I try to make it feel as if there were not too many light sources for night interiors."

The large softbox was used to get an ambient source that would produce enough light for Kimball to work at his preferred stop of T8/5.6. "In this sort of romantic film, you want a certain amount of depth of field, but you don't necessarily want the background in clear focus during close-ups," the cinematographer explains. "A film feels different when the image is softer or harder in the background. Depth of field is a key consideration; I'm constantly adding NDs every day to control what the audience will see onscreen."

Kimball notes that the anamorphic format has its own, special depth-of-field issues. "I like to use anamorphic lenses at around T5.6, and rarely much deeper than T8. Somehow the perception of depth of field is different; it is shallow and quite clearly defined, so you have to be more conscious of it. I definitely wanted Tom Cruise's ears to be



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Secret Agent Man

The crew prepares dolly tracks and a camera platform while shooting a night exterior on city streets.

in focus in tight shots, so the big softbox gave us a strong ambient key to get all the way to T8 or T5.6 to control the depth of field in a dark, night interior scene." Delgado recalls that the foamcore softbox was 4' x 8', with 1K open-faced instruments bounced against the inside. He adds, "We stuck some smaller Babies and Junior lights on stands in the corners of the bathroom, where we thought some sources might naturally belong."

Adding to the difficulty of the production was the fact that at least two cameras were rolling at all times. "John Woo likes to capture the performance, so we were always rolling an A and B camera," Kimball says. "The second camera was sometimes shooting inserts, sometimes just covering action. It's a great way to double your coverage, but it's not always easy for the camera team to get the lighting right for both." Delgado says he was always working to make the lighting serve both cameras' points of view: "It was a constant job of balancing the lighting to try to make the B-camera work

without taking anything away from A."

Kimball observes that the overwhelming scale of a big action movie creates additional obstacles to maintaining a consistent visual style. "The more equipment, people, visual effects and second and third units you have, the more it becomes a struggle to keep artistic control over the look — unlike on a small picture, where you do everything yourself," he says. However, Kimball had able assistance. He is effusive in his praise for second-unit director of photography Gary Capo. "I can't say enough about what great work Gary and his crew did, and how seamlessly it cut with mine. I'd still be in Australia working on the film if not for Gary!" Kimball exclaims. "You need a lot of help on a film with this many shots. Gary even shot some first-unit scenes when we really got pressed for time; he was out on an island off of Australia for weeks, shooting motorcycle and car chases and various vehicles blowing up."

Capo and his crew shot a key first-unit scene for the director of photography after Kimball and Delgado set up the complex lighting. When the underground laboratory where the villains are growing the deadly viruses is finally breached by the IMF operatives, Hunt enters a 60'-tall shaft through which sunlight, which the viruses use to replicate, is funneled and concentrated via a special lens. According to Kimball, he and Delgado placed about 20 4K HMI theatrical spotlights, "the hardest lights we could find," up in one corner at the top of the shaft. He explains, "We bounced those lights into two sets of front-surface mirrors to produce as much sharp light as possible going in two directions down the shaft."

Capo filmed that scene because Kimball was preparing to film another piece of the same sequence on another soundstage in Fox's Sydney complex. During this later part of the scene, it is revealed

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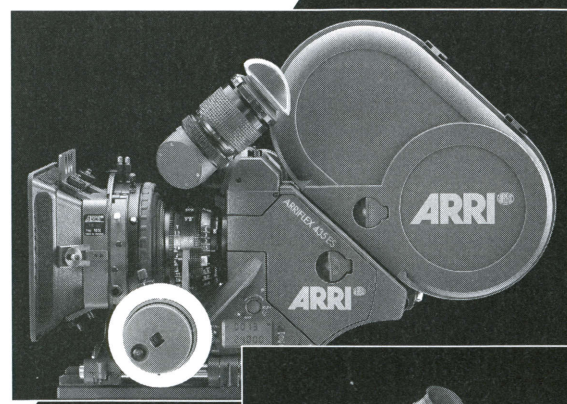

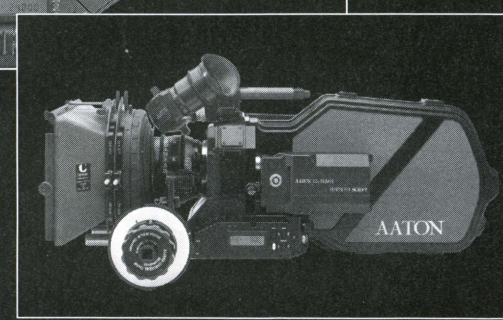

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that inside the lab, several 9' x 4' prisms further process the trapped sunlight. Kimball used the on-set presence of the prisms to motivate the play of fantastic, prism-generated rainbow effects on the walls of the lab, using on-camera and some off-camera prisms. "I would shine those pastel, rainbow prism effects around wherever I had the opportunity; I liked the way it looked," he notes. "With the hard light coming down out of the shaft, as well as the rainbow effects and the smoke, it's a really pretty scene."

Partially corrected Xenon lights were used to illuminate the prisms. "Because we were also using smoke, we wanted a light that would cut through and produce a nice, hard edge," says Kimball. In line with his penchant for mixing color temperatures, "we didn't fully correct the Xenons to tungsten color temperature, because I love the dramatic look of different qualities of light" in the same frame. However, the Xenons still required a good bit of management to create the desired effect. "We flagged them off extensively, because we weren't able to focus them as precisely as we needed to, and we couldn't get the sharp shafts of light any other way," says Delgado. "We had to be very careful not to get the flags too close to the lights, or they would burn up."

The laboratory set was built with a good deal of piping and ductwork near the high ceiling, which helped the camera team hide lights. This turned out to be very helpful, especially for the filming of overcranked action shots. "We had to maintain a high light level because we had cameras going at 120 frames per second. Once again, we ended up using an awful lot of light for a dark interior; we were at a split T8/11 stop," Kimball says. The lighting for the large laboratory set was supplied by about 30 10K HMIs and 20 20K HMIs hung from a truss system. About 20 5Ks and a dozen or so

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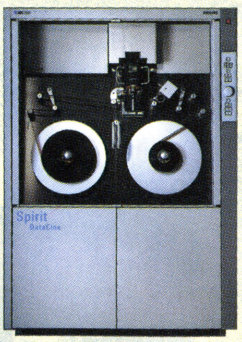

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smaller instruments were also hung high.

However, that was not all the lighting employed for this major action sequence. "There were also 50 Vari-Lites that we gelled red," explains Delgado. "Once the lab's intrusion alarms went off, we turned on the Vari-Lites. It wasn't choreographed; the Vari-Lites would just roam all over the set, and the actors would go in and out of the red light. It was semi-chaotic and added another dimension to the gunfight and the scrambling."

Delgado notes that the large laboratory set has several different looks. "When you first see the lab, it looks sterile and well-lit. When the break-in occurs and the alarms go off, it turns into a red room [via the Vari-Lites]. We lit the glass tunnel where the viruses are actually grown with green Image 80 Kino Flo tubes, the kind used to light greenscreens. We augmented the Kinos with regular lights with green gels [at points where] we wanted the green to flow out of the tunnel. You normally don't think of lighting anything with green in a movie, but it worked very well — it was kind of liquid-looking and it flowed well with the feel of the set."

One of the first scenes shot for *M:I-2* was a large-scale night exterior, which came to be known as the "streets of fire" sequence. Shot in Sydney (standing in for Spain), it required the illumination of several city blocks to approximate a religious festival populated by hundreds of extras, many of whom were carrying flaming torches. "We used three big helium-balloon lights, with four 4K HMI Par lights in each, to get an overall moonlight effect," says Delgado. "It was a city square that was the better part of an acre. We wanted to be able to see the faces of the crowd, but not necessarily feel that they were lit, and the overall balloon lighting helped us achieve that moonlight look. Four 18K HMIs each, perched on several 110'

Talkin' 'Bout Shaft

Cinematographer Donald Thorin, ASC helps director John Singleton update a classic thriller.

by Jean Oppenheimer

Photography by Eli Reed

In Gordon Parks's seminal 1971 film *Shaft,* the eponymous hero was the epitome of cool, a tough, self-possessed private eye who was as adept at taking out the bad guys as he was at bedding down the ladies. One of the first so-called "blaxploitation" films, *Shaft* introduced a new kind of action star and, by extension, a new cultural role model for black viewers. Played by Richard Roundtree as a cross between Sam Spade and James Bond, John Shaft was the first of a half-dozen black superheroes to hit the big screen.

Three decades later, *Shaft* is back, this time played by Samuel L. Jackson in a film directed by John Singleton (*Boyz N the Hood*,

Photos courtesy of Paramount Pictures.

Lunsgard," Woo notes with enthusiasm. "For our motorcycle chase, Greg rode on the back of another motorcycle with a Steadicam, which looks wonderful. He got on anything that moved with the Steadicam."

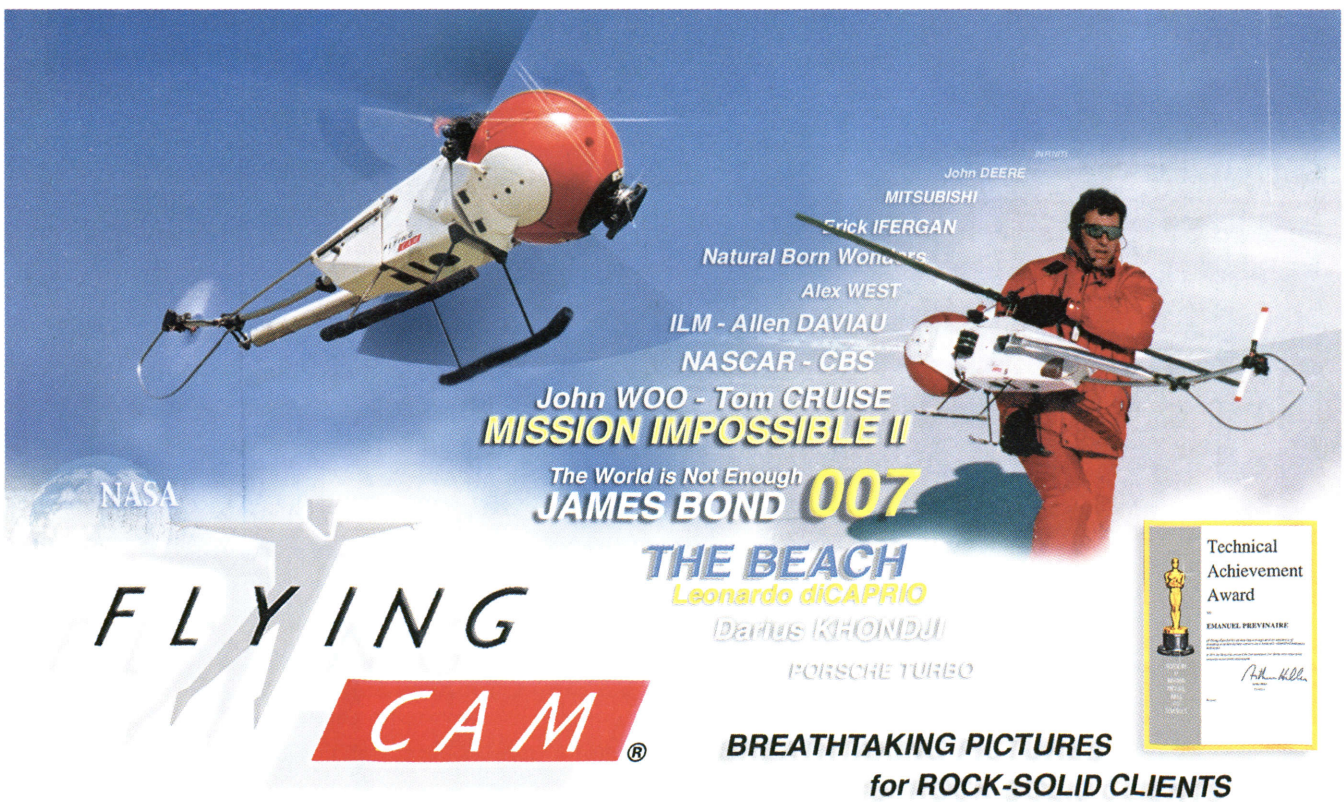
The show was shot with an array of Panavision cameras, including a Platinum Panaflex, a lightweight Panaflex and a Pan-Arri 435.

Kimball's main stocks were Kodak Vision 500T 5279 and EXR 100T 5248, with the fast 79 employed for the bulk of the job. "79 is definitely my favorite stock; you can do so much with that one film!" Kimball enthuses. He used Primo anamorphic prime lenses, noting that the 35mm and 40mm were Woo's favorites. "We also used the 48-550mm T4.5 11:1 Primo zoom a good bit during the compound camera moves, zooming while moving the Technocrane and dollying around 180 degrees and up and down."

Hunt homes in on his objective: a lethal designer virus that terrorists plan to unleash upon an unsuspecting populace.

The cinematographer says his guiding principle on any show is to think of each shot as a separate photograph. "You can't go wrong trying to make each onscreen image special in a way that helps tell the story," he maintains. "Doing so is what identifies a cinematographer as having a personal style."

For his part, Woo praises the cameraman's "calm under pressure and great sense of humor." He's already hired Kimball for his next project, *Windtalkers*, a World War II film starring Nicolas Cage. ■



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The crew admires a magic-hour sunset on location in Australia.

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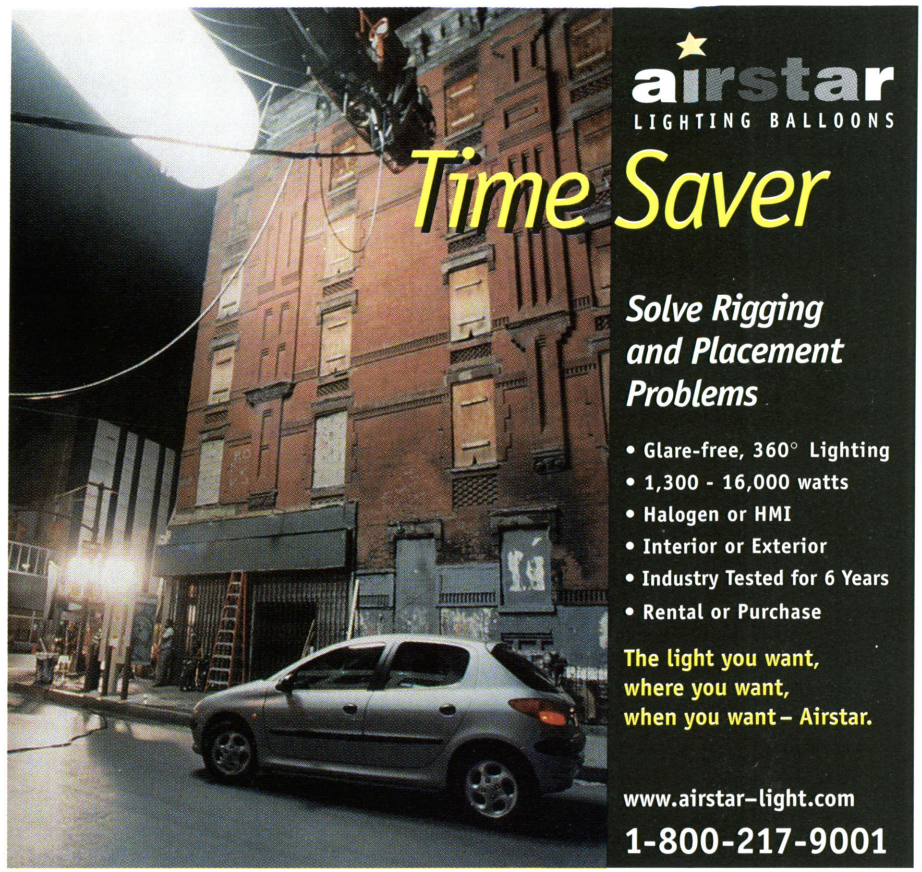
Condors, were used for back and rim light, and we'd bounce them into big 12 x 12s for the close crowd shots. It was an involved scene and required a lot of preparation."

Again, Woo's love of over-cranking for action shots required some serious wattage. Kimball recalls, "We were usually shooting at a stop of f8 in that plaza. That's a lot of light at night. The trick is to keep your ratios together so it still looks like night." The light from the flaming torches didn't need any reinforcement, except within the interiors that take place near the festival (which were shot on Fox's Sydney soundstage). Delgado explains, "We bounced Maxi-Brutes into gold lamé and gold Mylar and sent that light through the windows as the torch glow."

In keeping with the desire for a warm, authentic look, Woo and Kimball strove to film as many of their day exteriors as possible with natural light. The cinematographer points out that the wide-ranging action and chase scenes more or less precluded doing much lighting anyway. "You try to schedule your days so you're at the right place at the right time to get the most out of the setups," he says. "Assistant director Arthur Anderson and I worked very hard to schedule which shots would work best at what time, then we'd see if those schedule changes felt right to Woo. He was always very cooperative about moving things around to accommodate our need for natural light."

Of course, some artificial lighting was needed for medium and close shots. Delgado quips, "We would sometimes fill in with HMIs if we could get the shot and there was room to do it, but mostly the big chase and action scenes were lit naturally. Those were easy days for me."

The action scenes also benefitted from the bravery of the A-camera operator. "We had a great A-camera and Steadicam operator in Greg



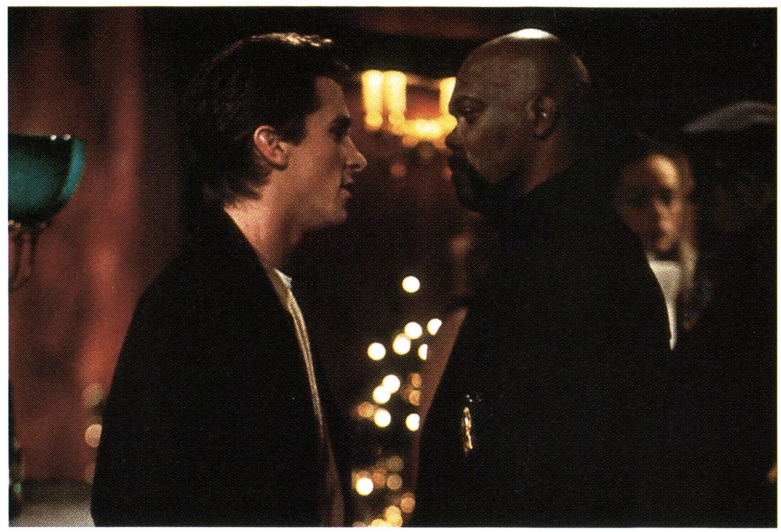
Rosewood). Instead of a private investigator, Shaft is now a detective in the New York City Police Department, but he is still the same confident, charismatic, unflappable renegade he was 30 years before.

The original *Shaft* was shot by Urs Furrer. Assuming the reins in the updated version was veteran cinematographer Don Thorin, ASC, a Nebraska native who began his film career as a loader at Twentieth Century Fox back when every studio maintained its own camera department. He worked his way up the ladder, operating for the likes of ASC members Haskell Wexler, Gordon Willis, Owen Roizman and the late Jordan Cronenweth — cameramen he still describes as his mentors — before earning his own director of photography stripes on Michael Mann's *Thief* (1981). Thorin's other credits include *An Officer and a Gentleman*, *Purple Rain*, *Midnight Run*, *Scent of a Woman*, *Little Big League*, *The First Wives Club*, *Nothing to Lose* and *Mickey Blue Eyes*.

Although he had seen the original *Shaft* years before, Thorin chose not to revisit the film before production began; he wanted the new picture to feel as fresh and original as possible. "John [Singleton] wanted it to have a contemporary, glossy look," says the cameraman, speaking by phone from his home in Idaho. "I wet the streets a lot to give it a glossy, high-tech look, and I used a lot of backlight.

"The picture was shot in Super 35, partially because we wanted the widescreen look," he continues. "Plus, we had a lot of night work, and I wanted to use the Primo lenses so I could work with less light."

Although he employed everything from a 14mm lens to a 400mm, plus a 4:1 zoom and an 11:1 zoom, Thorin relied primarily on the wider-angle lenses, particularly the 21mm, which provides a good depth of field. Scenes were frequently crammed with people, and the filmmakers always wanted to have a sense of foreground, middleground and background. Singleton also wanted a constant sense of movement, and the cameras — two Platinums and a high-speed Panavision — were nearly always on dolly tracks. A Steadicam was also available.



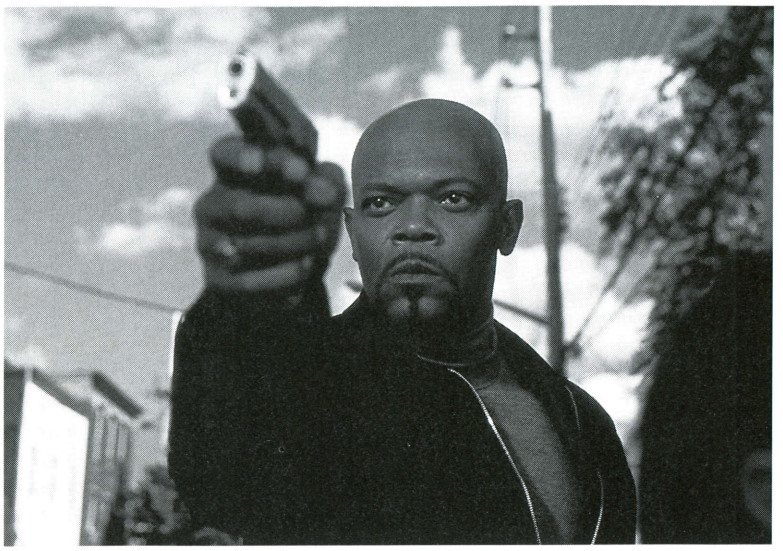
Opposite page: John Shaft (Samuel L. Jackson) takes a double-barreled approach to crime-fighting. This page, top: Shaft confronts his new nemesis, the wealthy Walter Williams (Christian Bale), who's been implicated in the murder of a young black man. Bottom: A "complicated man," the smooth-talking Shaft still manages to find some time for romance with Sgt. Council (Gloria Reuben).

The film is set in motion by the murder of a black youth outside a bar. The prime suspect is a rich, bratty white youth, played by Christian Bale, who flees to Switzerland while his father tries to subvert the course of justice back home. When the coast looks clear, the rich kid returns to the United States, but he hasn't counted on Shaft, who combs the city looking for a woman who witnessed the crime and can identify the killer. The search for the woman takes the detective all over the city. "Most directors who shoot in New York shoot just one aspect of it," notes Singleton. "Most are downtown films. This one was shot all over — uptown; College Point, Queens; Garrison Beach, Brooklyn; Washington Heights — places that have never been seen in films before. And Shaft is the link to all of these worlds within New York City. He is the man of the city; he runs the city."

More than 30 percent of the picture was shot during the night at practical exterior locations. Thorin used Kodak's 500T Vision 5279 stock for night exteriors and most interiors, and Kodak's 250D Vision 5246

Talkin' 'Bout Shaft

Top to bottom: Shaft takes aim, scopes out the 'hood, and consults with Uncle John (Richard Roundtree, who first played the dynamic detective) and Rasaan (Busta Rhymes).



for daylight exteriors. Whenever possible, he likes to use source lighting, which in this case meant sodium-vapor street lamps. When there weren't any lamps in sight, he pretended there were. "We used 1Ks, 2Ks, 5Ks, 10Ks and Babies, all of the normal tungsten lights," he remarks. "There are orange and green streetlights; these were mostly orange. Sometimes we'd put peach or apricot filters on them to warm them up a bit."

The biggest setup by far was the fight/murder and its aftermath. Starting inside the bar and spilling out into the street, the sequence necessitated lighting a six-block stretch of the city. "We had seven or eight Condors, six or seven generators and a whole lot of cable," recalls gaffer Gene Engels. Cranes with 10Ks were hidden between buildings and behind parked cars. Neon storefronts provided extra illumination. Streets and sidewalks were wet down, and passing cars picked up highlights from the reflections. Steam was pumped in, then backlit to make it appear white.

"The fight scene was pretty involved, with a lot of tight, in-your-face action," says Engels, a third-generation gaffer who hails from New Jersey. "With three blocks lit in every direction, the camera could whip around whenever it wanted. The background lighting was set, while the front-set lighting could be fine-tuned at the last minute. We also used an Ultra Spot Ultra Dino and hooked up three separate dimmers to it [to control the density of the light]. We wet down the street and had the Ultra Dino shining bright and hot.

"That was a tremendous shot, a 100' crane shot on a dolly that we started at the ambulances outside the bar. Shaft comes out of the building and walks through all the ambulances, passing underneath the camera, then walks up the avenue about 100 yards into traffic, with his

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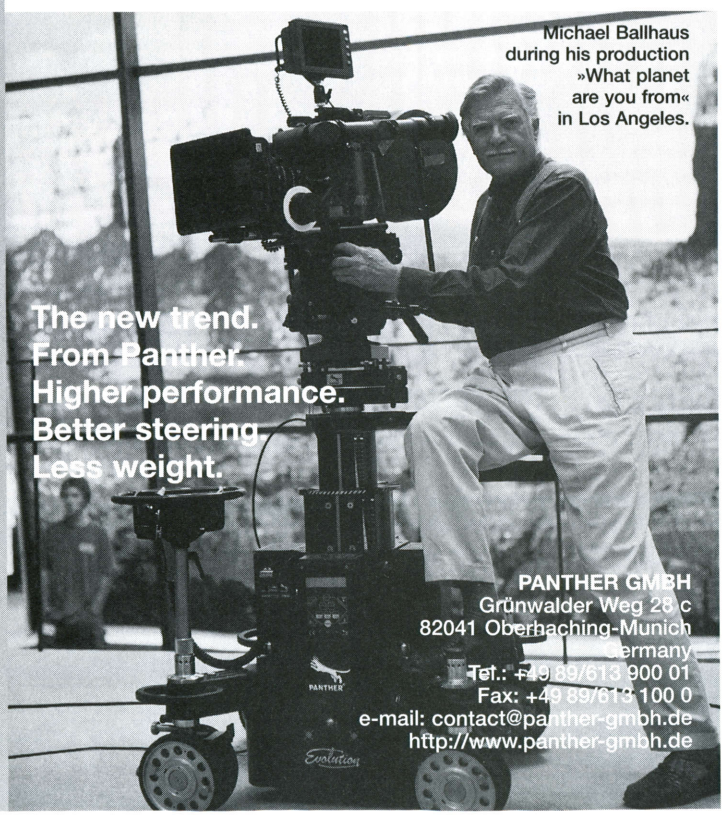

Talkin' 'Bout Shaft

black coat flapping in the breeze. It's gorgeous on film." Apricot gels were used extensively when lighting the background in order to match the sodium-vapor lighting on the streets. Facial lighting, on the other hand, was kept at 3200° Kelvin, nice and clean, with no coloration at all.

Despite the time it took to install all the lamps for this sequence, Thorin describes it as a fairly routine lighting setup. For him, daylight exteriors proved far more frustrating because "you get halfway through a sequence in a nice, overcast light, and suddenly the sun comes out. What do you do?" He pulled out Brutes. "I used as many as four Arcs on all day exteriors, instead of HMIs," he reports. "They're one size, they're daylight, they have a lot of spread, they're fast to use, and the light is softer and nicer looking than HMI light; it blends better with sunlight.

"Lighting outside is taking away as much light as it is putting in light," he continues. "I never shot close-ups of any of the cast in direct, hard sunlight. I would always take the sun off with a silk or with a net to make it a little bit softer, not quite as contrasty and easier to blend and match." For diffusion, Thorin leaned toward tracing paper. Occasionally he used a combination of spun glass and paper. Tiffen Corals were added for late-afternoon sequences.

Most of the interior sets, including the police station and two apartment complexes, were built at the Bedford Armory in Brooklyn. According to Engels, every light on every set — a total of 700 lights — was put through a dimmer and numbered. Putting lights on dimmers has several advantages. It allows the light to be lowered or raised in small increments. If all the practicals need to be taken down at once, it can be done in two seconds; if a specific light in the corner needs to be taken down, it can be done just as easily. And in a place like the Bedford Armory, which has 80' ceil-

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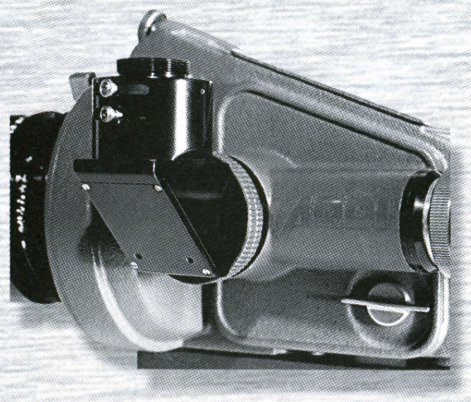

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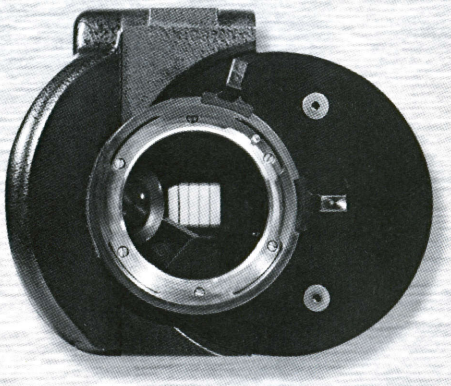

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Talkin' 'Bout Shaft

Shaft "takes out the trash" — in this case, Peoples Hernandez (Jeffrey Wright). Thorin notes, "I never shot close-ups of the cast in direct, hard sunlight. I would always take the sun off with a silk or with a net to make it a little bit softer, not quite as contrasty and easier to blend and match."

ings and no scaffolding, it was too time-consuming to bring a ladder into the middle of the set and send someone up to put on diffusion. The sets inside the armory were so immense that huge tarps, some measuring 50' x 100', had to be installed for soundproofing.

For Thorin, the most difficult scene was a three-minute Steadicam shot that follows Shaft as he brings some prisoners into the police station late one night. There's a lot of activity inside the precinct as he enters with the men and leads them to the sergeant's desk, then walks them into a separate room and locks them in a holding tank. All of the desks had practical lamps on them, and the light was warm and sourcey, except for the actual cell area, which Thorin wanted to give a cold, inhospitable feel.

Scenes within the holding tank were shot in the armory's sub-basement, where the ceiling was only 10' high. "We built the fluorescent fixtures for the holding cell with electronic ballast," notes Engels. "We normally might have used Kino Flos, but we built these lights out of fixtures that were already in the armory, albeit in a different location. We actually tore them out from other parts of the building. Most fluorescents can't be dimmed without a flickering effect, but you can take the electronic ballast down 60 percent — just like a Kino Flo, but a lot cheaper. It also doesn't hum like the old-time ballast did.

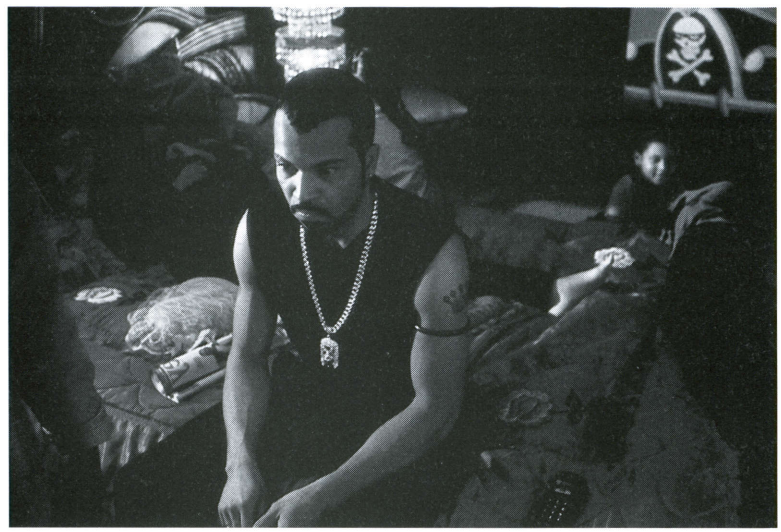
"We used mostly 32s and Kroma 50s during the day scenes," he adds. "For the night scenes, we used

the HMIs with a blue gel and then netted [the look] down into a darkened hue, so it had a glow to it but also a very deep, soft blue."

Even though the holding tank was a set, the armory's sub-basement had real windows that looked out onto red-brick buildings some 40' away. Those walls were lit from outside, and a bit of steam was pumped into the area to enhance the mood and provide a sense of depth.

Asked to sum up his philosophy as a cameraman, Thorin responds: "It's very simple. It's all a matter of taste and the degree of little details — fine-tuning the basics. You need to know when to paint with a broad brush and when to paint with a fine brush.

"It's important to maintain the same visual style throughout the film, and a lot of movies don't do that," he continues. "If you shoot with normal lenses, it's easy for a cinematographer to say, 'Hey, if I put a 400mm lens here and make everything out of focus, it will create a completely different look and be beautiful.' Isolated on its own, the shot might look beautiful, but whether it belongs in the film or not is another question. The idea is to take an audience through a film from beginning to end and make them believe whatever story you are telling, not to be sidetracked or distracted from telling the story. I try to be very careful about that." ■



The villainous Hernandez contemplates his next move.

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The ASC and Academy Awards honor 1999's top achievements in motion-picture cinematography.

by David Heuring, Jay Holben, Christopher Probst and Patricia Thomson

✶ Denotes ASC and Academy Award winner

American Beauty unit photography by Lorey Sebastian, courtesy of DreamWorks.

Each spring, the ASC and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences select five films and directors of photography to be honored for outstanding cinematography, and this year's crop of nominees was both impressive and eclectic. *American Beauty,* which won Best Cinematography honors from both organizations for Conrad Hall, ASC, tells the dark but oddly uplifting tale of one man's liberation from societal pressures and suburban social codes; *The Sixth Sense,* photographed by Tak Fujimoto, ASC, is an elegant and stylishly crafted horror film about a troubled child who sees visions of the dead; *Sleepy Hollow,* shot by Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC, brought nostalgic panache to the tale of Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman; *The End of the Affair,* photographed by Roger Pratt, BSC, is a sumptuous big-screen rendition of Graham Greene's semi-autobiographical novel about a doomed wartime romance; *Snow Falling on Cedars,* another tale of star-crossed lovers, earned raves for the camerawork of Robert Richardson, ASC; and *The Insider,* an account of tobacco executive Jeffrey Wigand's battle against his former corporate masters, is energized by Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC's creative compositions.

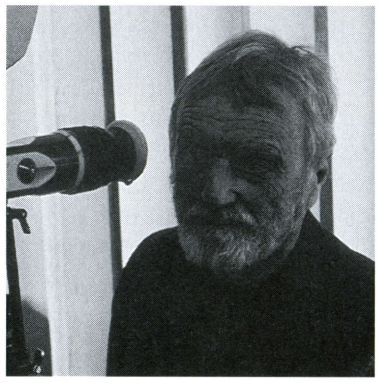
As always, *AC* has gleaned some fascinating insights from the nominated cinematographers, which we hereby present for your perusal.

(Editor's note: Because Emmanuel Lubezki's work on Sleepy Hollow *was covered in comprehensive detail in our December 1999 issue, we've allotted more space to the other nominees.)*

Conrad Hall, ASC*
American Beauty

"I don't think anybody involved with *American Beauty* had any real idea of the success it would enjoy," Conrad Hall, ASC told *AC* in April. The revered cameraman has enjoyed much of that success himself, winning an Academy Award, an ASC Award, a BAFTA Award and a National Society of Film Critics Award for his cinematography. In addition, his work was nominated by the Chicago Film Critics, the Online Film Critics Society and the Golden Satellite Awards.

Hall's Academy Award for *American Beauty* was his second; he'd won a previous Oscar for *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* in 1969. He has been nominated seven other times, for *Morituri* (1965), *The Professionals* (1966), *In Cold Blood* (1967), *The Day of the Locust* (1975), *Tequila Sunrise* (1988), *Searching for Bobby Fischer* (1993) and *A Civil Action* (1998). Hall's ASC Award was his third; he had also won for *Tequila Sunrise* and *Searching for Bobby*



Fischer, and he was nominated for *Love Affair* (1994). A recipient of the ASC's Lifetime Achievement Award (in 1994) and Camerimage's Golden Frog Life Achievement Award (in 1995), the 73-year-old cinematographer doesn't seem to be settling for quiet convalescence in a retirement community.

Tightly crafted by first-time film director Sam Mendes, *American Beauty* presents a dark, cynical view of the American dream, but it also offers a note of hope. The film highlights all of the typical trappings we supposedly hold so dear in our vision of average, middle-class, suburban life, but it "looks closer" at these apparent ideals and examines the more insidious elements of our complex times.

Hall was offered *American Beauty* after Tom Cruise recommended him to Mendes, an acclaimed theater director in London who was directing Cruise's wife, Nicole Kidman, in the hit play *Blue Room* at the time. Cruise had been executive producer of *Without Limits* (1998), which Hall had photographed for Robert Towne, and Hall was Cruise's first suggestion when Mendes asked him to suggest a cinematographer for his first feature. "When I interviewed for the film, I told Sam that I loved the script, but I was very concerned with how we were going to ultimately like these characters," Hall recalls. "They were all so quirky, dysfunctional and basically *unlikable* people. However, Sam said if we didn't like these characters, we were in deep, dark trouble and couldn't possibly have a successful film. He made it clear to me that it was quite simple to like these characters by examining my own psyche — he asked if there weren't deep, dark areas within myself that I perhaps didn't necessarily act out on, but felt nonetheless. It then became quite easy to identify [with] a lot of their dysfunctionality, because it's within us, too."

Hall credits the film's cast with fleshing out its "unlikable" characters. "I didn't fully understand [Mendes's] idea to begin with, but once the actors got hold of those wonderful words and started to react to one another, *that's* where the magic happened. That's where drama can occur, and that's where the palette for the visuals can become extraordinary. You can preconceive all sorts of ways to do a film — whether you should shoot quickly, shoot more traditionally, or any other technique — but to choose those ideas in advance is too hard. For me, [inspiration] comes from watching the actors rehearse with the director. Ultimately, it's the actors and the power of their performances that made the film's characters likable."

Hall spent a month on *American Beauty* before production

Hollow Man. Solid Teamwork.

The shot list for Hollow Man already included a lot of tricky motion control camera work to create the "invisible" effects. But the script contained yet another element that gave this technical feat an unprecendented twist — water.

General Lift's Joe Louis called on us to help him make it possible for cinematographer, Jost Vacano, ASC to shoot motion control sequences in extremely wet conditions as well as underwater. Actor, Kevin Bacon was to be filmed running through a tunnel as fire sprinklers dumped water at a rate of 4 gallons per second on him and the cameras. Another intense fight scene would require motion control footage shot at the bottom of a swimming pool.

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We'd like to thank Joe Louis and his crew for giving us this opportunity. Hollow Man proved to be quite a challenge, but then General Lift and HydroFlex proved to be a solid team.

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began, and he said it was particularly difficult to find appropriate locations for the Fitts and Burnham homes. "[We needed to find] two houses next to one another where we could shoot night-for-night without disturbing the neighborhood," he recalls. "We ended up on the Warner Bros. ranch backlot in a house that I shot over 30 years ago for a film called *Divorce American Style*. With a little rearranging by the production designer, Naomi Shohan, the two houses could be altered so that we could see into the garage from the boy's window and see across to the girl's bedroom.

"The interior of the Burnham home was [shot] in a house off the 405 freeway and Sunset Boulevard [in Los Angeles], while the interior of the Fitts home was shot in Hancock Park. So we were in Hancock Park when were shooting looking in at Ricky's room, and when we were shooting through his window toward Jane's room or down into the garage, we were on the Warner ranch. Naomi built several [false] rooms to accommodate the scenes, and I think the observations from window to window worked out very well."

The cinematographer says that the scenes involving the teens' bedrooms were difficult for another reason. "One of the most difficult scenes from me to light was when Ricky and Jane are in his room [at the beginning of the film]. The scene begins with the video image onscreen, which starts to pan around the room, and the camera pulls back to see Jane as he gives her the camera. She then turns the camera around on him, and we see that happening on the TV, as well as on the camcorder's little video screen. We shot that scene in a practical room; it wasn't on a set on a stage. Since we shot on the Warner ranch, they built Ricky's room so that it could look into Jane's room next door and overlook the garage. It was a real room that was about 12' by 16'.

"The room had a bed, a dresser and the wall with the TV and all of his tapes on the shelves, so there wasn't that much room to play around; also, the television acted like a mirror of the whole room, and you'd get a reflection of the lights in the TV. We still had to be able to see everything, so the only way to deal with all of this was to use a Kino Flo that was placed up inside one of the shelves behind Wes [Bentley, who played Ricky Fitts]. Because it was a Kino Flo, it not only acted as a backlight on Wes, but also as a downlight on the bookshelf, a sidelight, and every other kind of light as well. I had it somewhat flagged off of the walls, so it still gave a bit of the impression of candlelight. I then had a Pepper shooting onto a piece of beadboard hidden behind the bed. Finally, we had some room tone. I therefore lit the scene with a total of three lights. The main problem was preventing the lights from being reflected in the TV set."

Hall photographed *American Beauty* with Panavision Platinum cameras and Primo prime and zoom lenses in the Super 35 2.35:1 aspect ratio. Given his penchant for shooting wide open at a T1.9, he notes that he favors higher-speed stocks to gather as many subtle, ambient lighting effects as possible. The cinematographer utilized Kodak Vision 500T 5279 for the majority of the film, although he occasionally employed Vision 200T 5274 and EXR 5248 for some of the daylight interior and exterior scenes. "I had a terrible problem with adjusting to the new print stock during this film," Hall admits. "When I started the picture, Kodak had just introduced the new printing film, from 86 to Vision, so I was caught in this terrible situation. I had so much contrast in the way I was used to lighting that I complained to Kodak, who then went back and gave me a new batch of 79 that was five percent less

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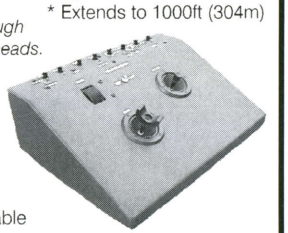

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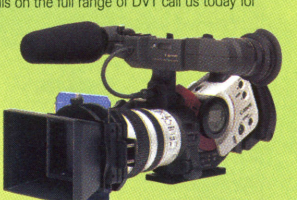

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contrasty. Also, I used a ⅛ Tiffen Black ProMist [filter] on almost everything, but in retrospect, maybe that wasn't such a great idea."

He elaborates, "One thing you always have to consider with Super 35 is that in order to project the film, you have to make an optical [blow-up to an anamorphic release print], and that optical step is going to cause a certain amount of image degradation. You therefore don't need the slight bit of diffusion that would normally takes the rawness out of the sharpness of the lenses. I felt we lost a little too much sharpness [due to the blow-up]. The optical step would have almost given us [the quality] of having a ⅛ Black ProMist! When I saw the film in a theater, I felt the picture was a little bit fuzzy, a bit too diffused. If I hadn't used the filter, the film might have ended up closer to how I was seeing it through the lens."

With 50-plus years in the film industry behind him, Hall emphasizes that effective communication is an integral part of filmmaking. In fact, the cinematographer recalls that one of *American Beauty*'s signature images was created out of a misunderstanding. "We were setting up the scene that involved Lester [Kevin Spacey] and Ricky smoking a joint behind the building," recounts Hall. "Sam was busy with another matter, so he asked me to start setting up the scene. With the characters smoking dope, I naturally figured that they would look for an area with a little privacy. I had our shiny, black camera truck brought up against the wall to create a narrow kind of hallway as a place for them to do their stuff in private.

"I had the shot all lit and ready to go, and Sam finally came out and said, 'What's this? The idea is that they do it out in the open!' So we drove the truck away and then had two people standing against the wall adjacent to an empty parking lot in a huge shot, completely open for all to see. That was completely opposite to

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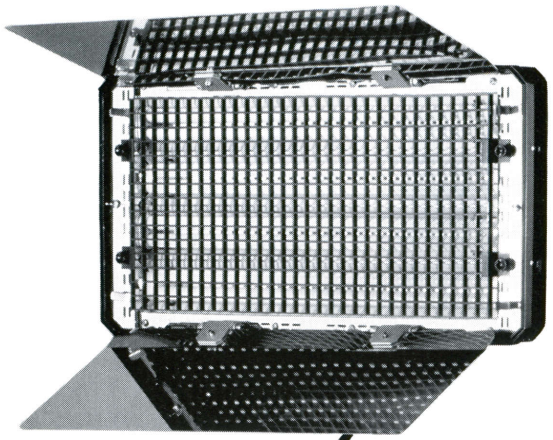

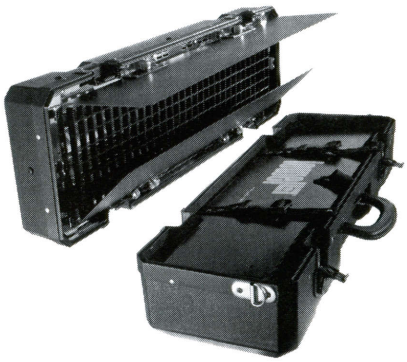

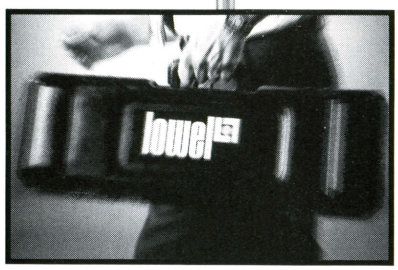

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my instinct! And with that wide shot, I no longer had anywhere to rig a light from — before, I had a light coming from the top of the truck just out of frame. In devising a means of lighting the scene, I took a big light way off to the left, put it on the pin and cut the light off the wall so that it would just crosslight the actors. I then had a large soft source behind the camera to fill them in a bit. The shot ended up being very graphic, and it worked perfectly for the tone of the scene. Even though I had set up something that Sam didn't want, the scene turned out quite wonderfully, because it established their characters and further showed how quirky these characters were -- smoking dope in the open and not caring who saw them!"

Despite the film's numerous accolades, Hall maintains that the most gratifying aspect of the project was the work itself. "The thing that's so wonderful about *American Beauty* is that it's such a good story," he concludes. "Everything fell into place because Sam Mendes had such a clear vision of where to take this story; that made all of us contribute not three different visions — his, hers and mine — but to one vision. All of our work fit into what he was trying to achieve with Alan Ball's incredible script.

"Any film you work on is like a war. You can plan to make an attack, but then someone circles your flank with blue or pink pages, things change, and you must arrive quickly at new visual solutions. That's why at the outset, after imbuing in my bones as deep an understanding of the story and characters as possible, I stay open to the filmic process and attentive to the director's vision, and use my intuition to find the appropriate artfulness to best suit the story. In this case, Sam turned the script on its head in the editing process to produce the film you see — a film that we all now agree is the best way to see the Burnhams and Fittses.

Some films you work on stick with you; what makes absolutely wonderful cinema is when the collaborative process comes together in a way that is artfully appropriate for *that particular* story. I felt that way about *American Beauty*."

— Christopher Probst

Tak Fujimoto, ASC
The Sixth Sense

This year marked the first ASC nomination for veteran cinematographer Tak Fujimoto, ASC, who is perhaps best known for his longtime collaboration with director Jonathan Demme. Fujimoto has photographed nine features for the Academy Award-winning director, including *Melvin and Howard, Swing Shift, Something Wild, The Silence of the Lambs, Philadelphia* and *Beloved*.

After attending University of California-Berkeley and the London Film School, Fujimoto began working for Haskell Wexler, ASC, and Carl Bernstein at Dove Films, where he did "everything, [including] sweeping up, loading mags, driving the truck and shopping for props. It was a good education," he remembers. "Then came a time when they said, 'Well, what do you want to do?'" Prior to that moment, Fujimoto had also worked as an assistant editor, but it was the time he spent on set watching Wexler work that really inspired him, so he decided to pursue a career as a camera assistant.

Fujimoto's first credit as a cinematographer was for director Terence Malick on *Badlands* in 1973. Since then, he has photographed more than 40 feature films and worked with a variety of directors, including John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club, Ferris Bueller's Day Off*), Howard Deutch (*Pretty in Pink* and the upcoming *Replacements*), Carl Franklin (*Devil in a Blue Dress*), Tom Hanks (*That Thing You Do!*) and Irwin Winkler (*Night and the City*). In 1999, Fujimoto teamed up with relative newcomer Manoj Night Shyamalan (credited as M. Night Shyamalan) to bring *The Sixth Sense* to life.

Sixth Sense Photos courtesy of Buena Vista Pictures Marketing. Photos by Ron Phillips.

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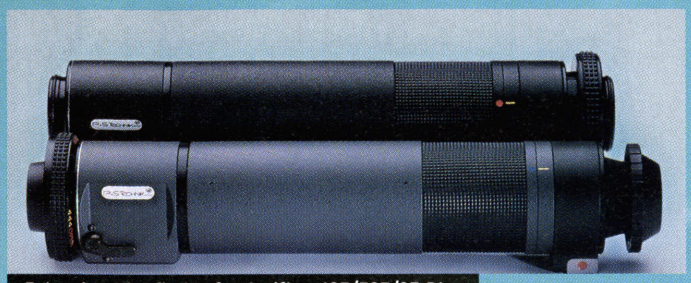

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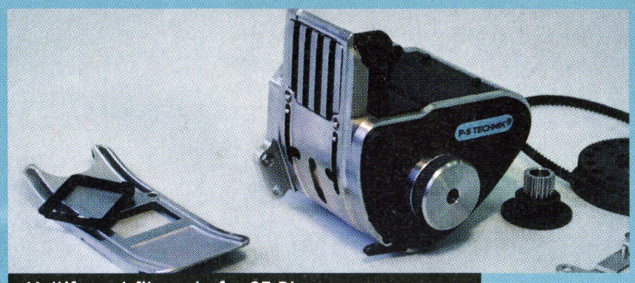

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The sale of Shyamalan's script transpired in a single day -- a truly rare occurrence in today's Hollywood. Supporting the effort were producers Frank Marshall and Kathleen Kennedy, together with David Vogel, then president of the Buena Vista Motion Picture Group. Working closely with storyboard artist Brick Mason, Shyamalan carefully outlined the visual style of the film by sketching every single shot. He chose Fujimoto to photograph the film largely because he loved the cinematographer's work on *The Silence of the Lambs*. "It ranks highly as one of my favorite films, and I have always loved the look of it very much, " offers Shyamalan. "For *The Sixth Sense*, I knew I wanted a kind of heightened realism, but one that really stayed as grounded to reality as possible in the visual approach. I thought Tak had achieved that same feel so well in *Silence of the Lambs*, and it seemed like a natural step to have him come onto this film."

Fujimoto remembers that Shyamalan had a very clear, focused vision of *The Sixth Sense*. "Along with some very experienced directors, I've worked with a lot of first-, second-, and third-time directors," the cinematographer submits. "Night, who had done two films prior to this one, was very organized and confident about what he wanted. When I came on during preproduction, he had already done a full pass of the film with storyboards, and we had several long sessions in his office, talking about the look of the movie -- how it would be cut together, and what sections were going to be shot in what style.

"I find that a lot of relatively new directors need a strong, helping hand to keep them on track, but Night was very focused and prepared for the task," he continues. "In many respects, one challenge for a cinematographer working with a new director is to find where you can best fit into his methods. In the beginning, [new] directors might be a little nervous about how things are going. I try to reassure them and simply give them a good environment in which to work. Ultimately, they'll be the ones making the decisions, and you're just there to help out. With Night, my approach was to merely follow his lead; he was very confident and wanted everyone to know exactly what he had in mind. Storyboarding helped quite a bit, because we simply carried those boards with us every day and followed them pretty much according to how they were initially sketched."

Shyamalan says Fujimoto's contributions to *The Sixth Sense* were significant and varied. "He absolutely enhanced every shot of the film; he brought a heightened sense of suspense and eeriness to each sequence through the framing, the movement of the camera, and especially through his lighting," the director observes. "It's all about the suspense of the movie — trying to maintain reality and not play the ghost for anything but real."

To achieve Shyamalan's vision, Fujimoto and production designer Larry Fulton designed a very muted and desaturated palette that was carefully highlighted by the striking use of red objects. "The color red was used throughout the film as a strong punctuation device," Fujimoto affirms. "The red doors to the church, the red doorknob to the basement, the red dress Olivia Williams wears to dinner

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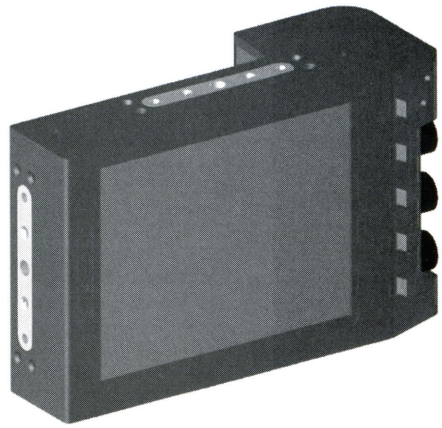

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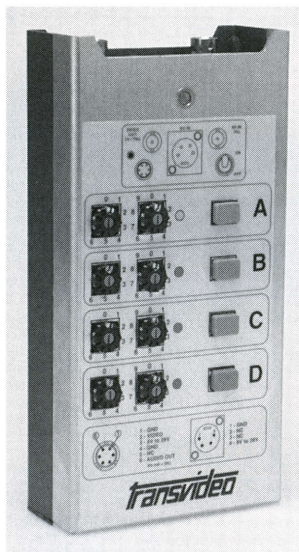

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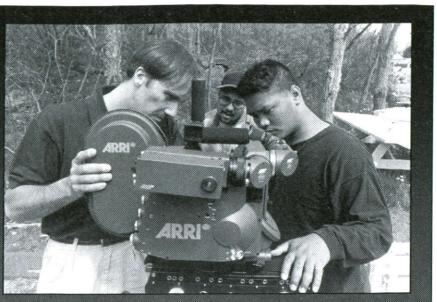

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with Bruce Willis, Cole's red sweater — with each of these objects, Night wanted to denote something that had been touched by the other world. They all had more meaning than just face value. Each of these objects brings with it a nagging feeling — something about that item is nagging at the characters. And of course, [there is also] Cole's red tent in his bedroom, which is a form of refuge for him and also where he takes his first step toward dealing directly with his problems. I tried to use the flashlight inside the tent to accentuate the redness, and the light bouncing off the tent from the flashlight had a fantastic quality. I have to give a lot of credit to Larry [Fulton] and Joanna [Johnston, the film's costume designer] for helping to make the overall color scheme very drab and down so that those other objects could be highlighted."

The final revelation of the story's major plot secret made it necessary for the filmmakers to plant clues throughout the film that the majority of the audience would not even notice. This was carefully done through costume design, lighting and vigilant blocking of scenes. Willis's clothing, for example, was meticulously chosen to appear slightly different in various lighting situations. "The material would look subtly different — grays, grayish-blue or grayish-brown — depending on what light it was in," confirms Shyamalan. "Tak made sure to light it slightly differently from scene to scene, but in a very controlled way so as not to draw any attention to it. The objective was for the audience not to notice at all."

Another device Fujimoto and Shyamalan employed to amplify the mood of the film was the intensive use of shadows. Many sequences feature shots of a character's shadow, detailing his or her actions in silhouette form. Fujimoto and Shyamalan carefully devised sequences to avoid showing any shadow from Willis,

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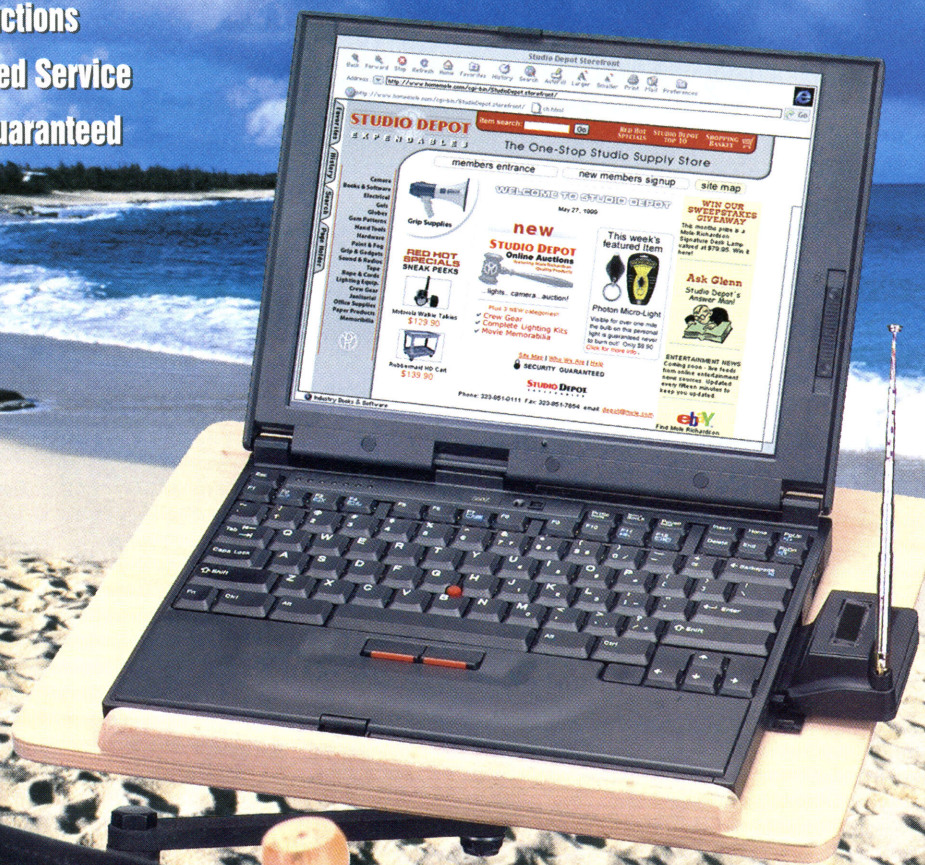

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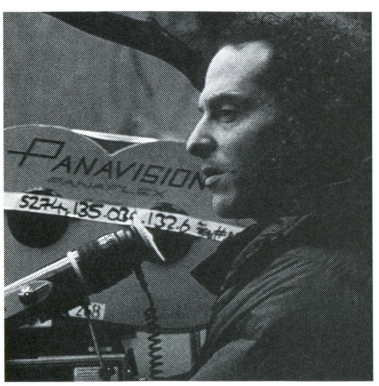
making him the only major character in the film who consistently does not cast a shadow. Although it wasn't always practical to completely eliminate his shadow (and the production did not go so far as to digitally remove it), the filmmakers made sure that Willis didn't cast any obvious shadows, and they also sought to accentuate other characters' shadows, especially that of Cole. This technique is perhaps most memorably apparent in a sequence in which the boy visits the bedroom of a recently deceased girl (Mischa Barton), whose ghost visited him the night before. As Cole enters her bedroom, we don't see the boy himself; rather, we see his shadow slowly move over the girl's toys, revealing where his attention falls as he selects one toy from the shelf and takes it with him.

Also contributing to the overall mood was the design of camera coverage to heighten the tension of certain scenes. For example, when Cole's mother (Toni Collette) confronts the boy about an heirloom from her late mother that she has found in his room, Fujimoto and Shyamalan cover the sequence in one long shot. The scene begins with a wide two-shot of mother and son at the kitchen table, and as the tension builds in their conversation, the camera slowly pushes closer to the table. When Cole's mother asks him about a pendant, the shot pans slightly to eliminate Cole from the frame and continues to push in on his mother. As the exchange progresses, the camera shifts coverage by slowly panning from one character to the other. The scene builds and the camera pushes ever closer to the characters, making the pans between them grow longer and longer. "That whole sequence was carefully orchestrated," offers Shyamalan. "We knew exactly which line we would begin a pan on, and whose lines would be spoken in the dead spaces between the characters. That way, there was a certain amount of surprise as the camera went to each character. As we got closer and tighter, there would be longer and longer stretches of negative space between the two people, when the audience would see nothing but the kitchen behind them. This was a way to visually define the uncomfortable silences and tension in the air. Both of them are on edge, at their wits' end, and the shot just squeezes and suffocates them."



Sleepy Hollow Unit photography by Clive Coote, courtesy of Paramount Pictures.

Another collaborative asset was working in Shyamalan's hometown of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where Fujimoto had previously photographed the two films, *Philadelphia and Beloved.* "Tak had a great rapport with everyone around us," says Shyamalan. "All of the crews knew him and had had great experiences with him on his previous films there, so they loved him. That camaraderie on the set really helped create a relaxed environment."

In addition to Fujimoto's ASC Award nomination, *The Sixth Sense* garnered six Academy Award nominations, including nods for best picture, best director and best original screenplay.

— Jay Holben

Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC
Sleepy Hollow

A rising star in cinematography circles, Emmanuel Lubezki, ASC, AMC, has demonstrated his considerable ability with the strikingly beautiful images and lush lighting he has contributed to the Hollywood films *A Little Princess* (which earned him both Academy and ASC Award nominations; see *AC* June '96, p. 80), *A Walk in the Clouds, Great Expectations* and *Meet Joe Black.* He has also demonstrated versatility by shooting several comedies, including *Reality Bites* and *The Birdcage,* and he earned three consecutive Ariel Awards (Mexico's equivalent of the Oscar) for his work on *Like Water for Chocolate, Miroslava* and *Amber.*

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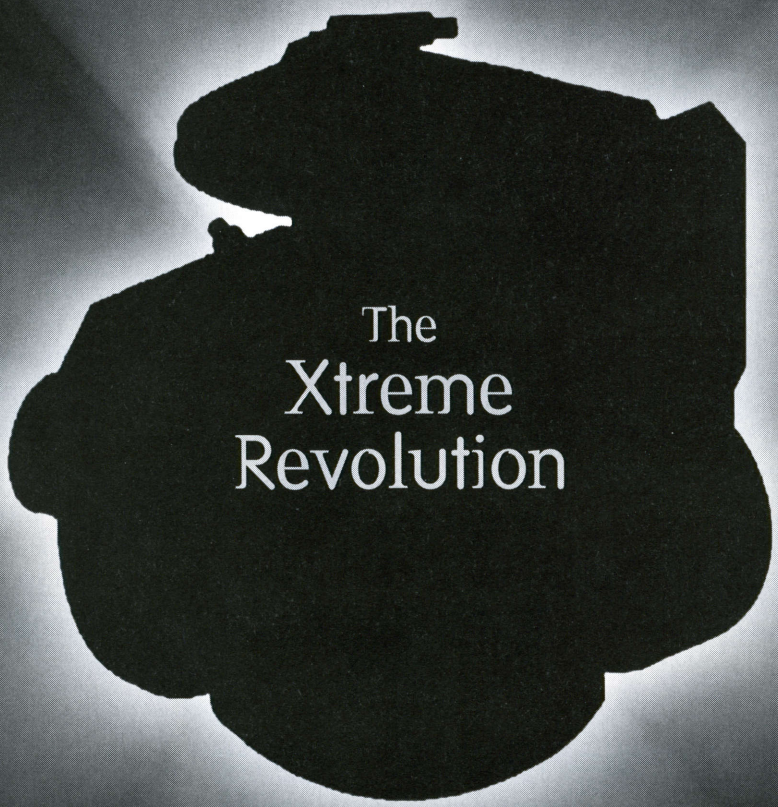

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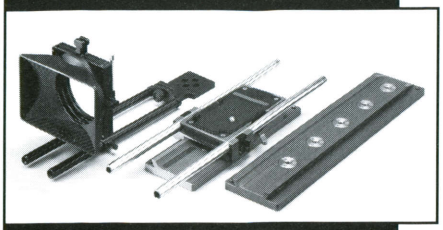

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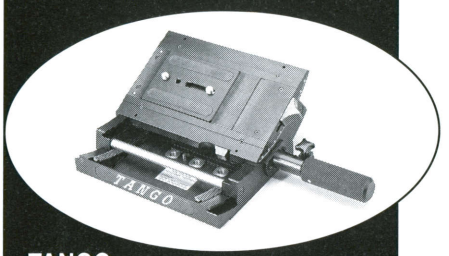

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On *Sleepy Hollow,* Lubezki and director Tim Burton fashioned a stylized, slightly artificial feel that paid homage to classic horror pictures from Hammer Films, as well as Mario Bava's 1960 chiller *Black Sunday*. Outlining his approach to the project, Lubezki explains, "In actuality, I don't think *Sleepy Hollow* resembles the Hammer Films, except in the way it was made. We did a lot of work on soundstages, and we tried to emulate that 'classic movie' feel. The Hammer Films were made that way because the filmmakers on those pictures didn't have a lot of money. We did it because Tim liked the idea of creating a synthetic, pictorial look. Shooting that way also gave us control of the various visual elements, such as the color and contrast, as well as the seasonal elements, like the fog and wind. Tim wanted the whole movie to be in a fall/winter season. We also wanted to control the amount of reality in the movie. It's not a historical reconstruction, it's a fantastic tale. One of the great things about the movie was making it on very stylized sets. We wanted to find our own reality within a completely theatrical world."

For complete coverage of Lubezki's work on *Sleepy Hollow,* see the December 1999 issue of *AC*.

Roger Pratt, BSC
The End of the Affair

Roger Pratt, BSC, has kept good company over the years, teaming up with such top-notch directors as Sir Richard Attenborough, Terry Gilliam, Mike Leigh, Tim Burton and Kenneth Branagh. Along the way, he has ventured hither and yon in the world of film genres, shooting everything from the sublime to the ridiculous, from Shakespeare's *King Lear* to a segment of *Monty Python's The Meaning of Life* ("The Crimson Permanent Assurance"). He brought incredible fantasy worlds to life in *Brazil*, *12 Monkeys* (see *AC* Jan. '96) and *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, and has also photographed the historical milieus of *Shadowlands* and the Ernest Hemingway saga *In Love and War*.

Given his impressive filmography, why was *The End of the Affair* Pratt's very first Oscar nomination? "It's because I got better, and this subject suits the way I like to photograph things," the 53-year-old British cinematographer declares. "I loved the book and have known it for a long time, and the script was good. It all seemed to come together on this project."

The book, in this case, was Graham Greene's semi-autobiographical novel about Maurice Bendrix (Ralph Fiennes), a writer who has an affair with Sarah Miles (Julianne Moore), the unhappily married wife of a dull civil servant (Stephen Rea), during World War II. The screenwriter was director Neil Jordan, with whom Pratt had previously worked on the 1986 drama *Mona Lisa*. During the intervening years, the two had often talked about working together again, but this was the first time their schedules and interests meshed.

On *The End of the Affair,* the duo crafted a cinematographic style that matched the story's mood — a controlled, restrained look that masks a hidden world of raging passions. "There are certain moods you like to create," says Pratt, "and this suited my style. I try to light things organically, using windows as source lights and that sort of thing, and keeping the palette restricted. Let me put it this way: what *won't* suit me is a comedy that needs to be brightly lit. That's not the sort of thing I enjoy doing, because in the end, that's fairly simple." By contrast, *The End of the Affair* contained scene after scene of dim flats and rainy nights. The risk in such situations, says Pratt, is that "you're on the very edge of things looking too dark.

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"The mood of the piece was close to my own experience," he elaborates. "I wasn't born during the war, but I experienced a bit of its aftermath. Even in the 1950s, there was restraint in Britain in terms of luxury items and so on. That restraint always struck me as being a cold and dark part of British life. It manifested itself in silly things, like having only one light bulb in the middle of each room, which is pretty depressing, and most houses being cold and badly painted. That's really what governed the way we approached the film's photography and production design."

Likewise, the palette reflected Pratt's postwar memories. Though a tale of passion, the film is dominated by chilly blues and greens. "We were trying to restrict it to those sort of colors, because it seemed that in those days, the most plentiful paint for home decoration was this terrible green hue. That end of the spectrum was what we all experienced." The only relief from this in the film is in the scarlet wardrobe of Sarah, and, significantly, the golden light and warm, brown hues of the church interiors.

Pratt used Kodak's Vision 500T 5279 for the night exteriors and the scenes shot in Shepperton Studios, and Vision 250D 5246 for daytime exteriors in old London. "I always work with Kodak," he attests. "Their stocks are more malleable, and they allow you to create the look you want." For this film, he abandoned his usual Panavision camera and employed two Moviecams, largely because they were the equipment of choice for his camera operator, Mike Roberts. The switch suited Pratt just fine. "The Moviecam is a good alternative, and it allowed me to use my Cooke Series 4 lenses, which had just come onto the market." The cameraman adds, "I've got a slight bias in this respect, because I was born in Leicester, the town where these lenses are made."

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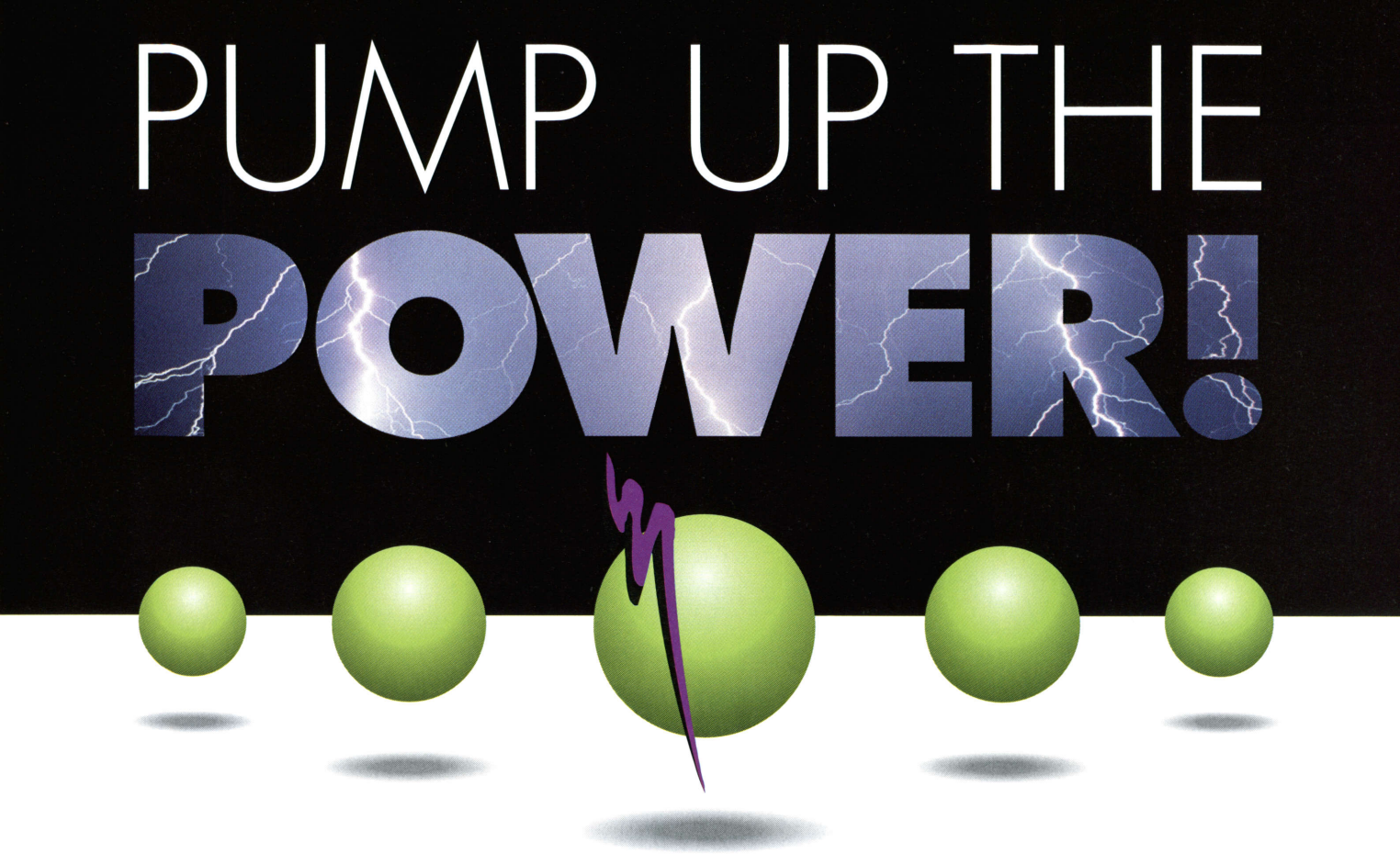

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Nothing too bizarre or distorting was used; in line with his unobtrusive approach, Pratt opted primarily for a standard Cooke 18-100mm zoom, deploying an Angenieux 25-250 HR zoom for some close-ups.

One basic trick he did rely upon was diffusion. In addition to filters, he used two other tools: rain (lots of it) and smoke. In a beautiful chapel scene, for instance, the light becomes almost palpable, streaming through the Gothic windows and filling the chapel with a white radiance. "We used quite a bit of diffusion on the lens, and a lot of smoke diffusion," Pratt explains. "As Ridley Scott taught us, filling the stage with a small but overall amount of smoke gives you that very slight softening of the image, which I thought suited [the chapel sequence] very well."

It's possible to look at the treatment of light in such cases metaphorically. Characteristically for Greene, who was a lapsed Catholic, God is an active player in *The End of the Affair*, and He is even responsible for one of the narrative's key plot points. Light has represented God in religious art for centuries, but Pratt and Jordan were aiming for something more subtle. While it may be true that the scenes inside the light-infused church represent a lapse in continuity, as Pratt himself points out (they directly follow shots of the characters running through torrential rain), there's only one instance of light that palpably embodies the divine. "When Sarah's in the church on her own, we used a backlight to rim-light her, and there's actually a flare in the shot. We did shoot the scene without it, but it seemed to work in the film. It's very subtle, but maybe it gives that suggestion [of a divine presence]."

Subtlety was also the goal when Jordan and Pratt addressed one of the book's most significant components: its dual perspective. Largely told in the first person, the novel abruptly shifts perspectives midway through the narrative, after the jilted writer hires a detective who confiscates Sarah's diary. The key scenes are then replayed from her wholly different — and revelatory — point of view. "There was quite a big discussion about whether we should treat the flashbacks in a different way photographically, particularly whether we should make them two perspectives," Pratt recalls. "Neil, more than I, felt that wasn't the right way to approach this particular piece, and people would have to realize what was happening without a *trick*. We made slight changes, but nothing that was too crude." For instance, during a restaurant scene in which the lovers have an awkward reunion after a two-year separation, the camera slowly circles the characters, beginning on one face and ending on the other. When the scene is replayed from Sarah's perspective, the direc-

The End of the Affair Unit photography by David Appleby, courtesy of Columbia/TriStar Motion Picture Group.

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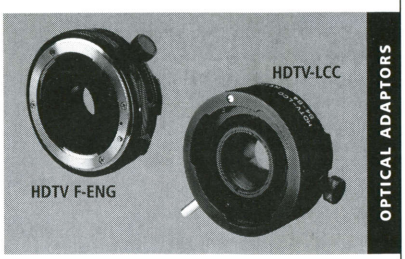

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tion of camera movement is reversed — a detail that subliminally changes the viewer's perspective.

Only once is the different point of view placed front and center. This occurs during the film's pivotal moment, when Bendrix enters his hallway to check for an "all clear" signal and is caught in a powerful explosion that blows him down the staircase and leaves him an inert heap. The film's central question — is he dead, and is his lover's panicked promise to God what brings him back to life? — finds different answers in the two versions. "The key to that scene was what you *didn't* see, because you had to believe he could survive, but that she thought he was dead," says Pratt, who singles this out as the film's most challenging sequence. "In fact, we filmed it twice: one take in which the dust practically annihilated the scene, and another that was much lighter, with almost no dust, just debris. Neil used a mixture of those two takes to create that rather difficult feeling of ambiguity."

For the explosion itself, the filmmakers set up a bluescreen shot with Fiennes positioned in front of a large, stained-glass window. To be accurate, the explosion had to occur in two stages: first, the glass bows outward, sucked out by a vacuum, and then it implodes in a thousand pieces as the blast's shock waves hit the window. "We had six cameras on the explosion," says Pratt. The shot had to pack a punch, because it's the first moment where the war invisibly intrudes on the lovers. "Unlike the Attenborough film *In Love and War*, where we showed a lot of the campaign in Italy, we wanted to make the war a background thing until the explosion hits Bendrix. It's almost like an intrusion on everything that's come before."

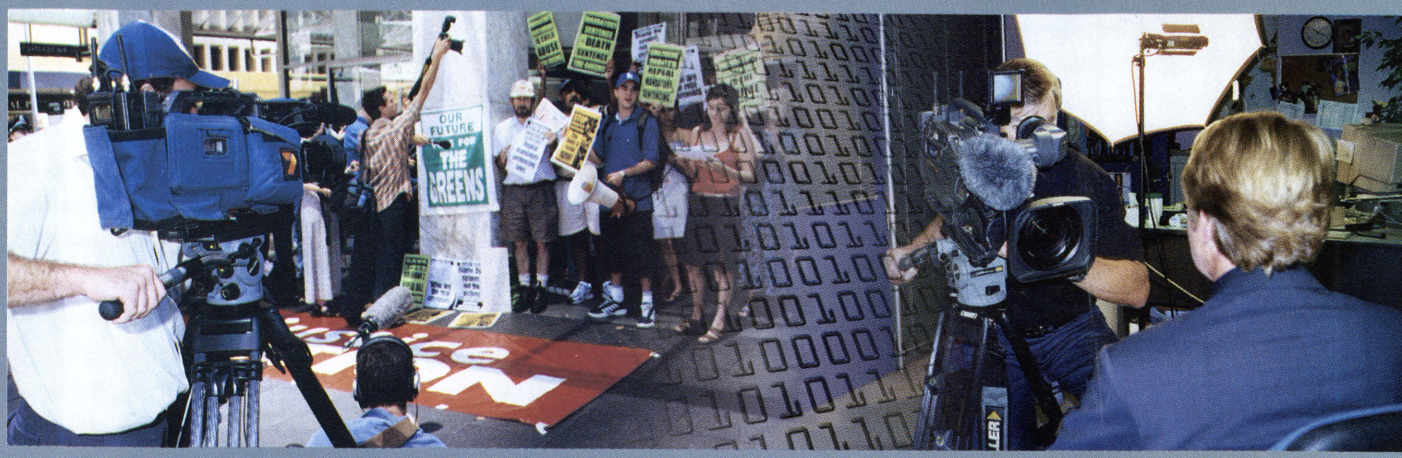
The other emotionally difficult scene was the death of Sarah, a moment shared by the novelist and her deceived but loyal husband. Once again, Pratt drew on his personal memories. "I used my experience of my mother's death, in the way that people seem to shrink when they die." Hewing to their general strategy, the filmmakers chose a less-is-more approach. "You want to be totally explicit about what's happened when she's died," Pratt says, "but it doesn't merit being gruesome in any way."

Thus, the drama unfolds outside the death chamber, with a Steadicam following Bendrix as he springs up from his writing desk at the sound of the husband's anguished cry, then rushes into the corridor to catch him in his arms. To heighten the emotional key, Pratt manipulated the film speed ever so slightly. "We started in real time, went to slight slow motion as Ralph rushes into the corridor, then speeded up for the end of the scene, when Stephen Rea says, 'I can't handle this on my own.' At that point, the Steadicam pans over to reveal the body on the bed." (A closer shot of Moore was filmed, but the filmmakers did not use it, deeming it "too explicit.")

To accomplish the speed ramp, Pratt used the Moviecam's shutter-iris coordinator. "It's quite a good appendage of the Moviecam," he says. "In fact, they were one of the first to link the shutter and the iris, so you could just prearrange the ramp up to 50 frames, then back down again." He adds, "I think the first film that ever did it was *Raging Bull;* [cinematographer Michael Chapman, ASC] used it to fly into the ring, then slow down. The technique has become quite common now."

The project's greatest headaches, for Pratt and everyone else, were caused by the innumerable scenes set under a dismal London rain. "You always have it a little heavier than you want to, which creates enormous problems for everyone, including the sound department. You want to *see* the rain, because everyone's taken enormous trouble to set it up, but it can be very uncom-

Arrow 50



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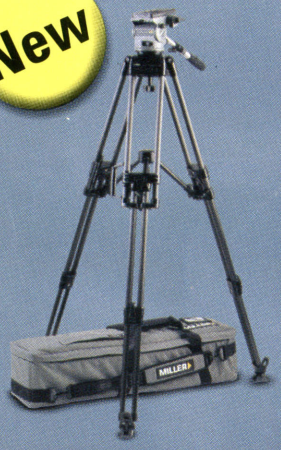

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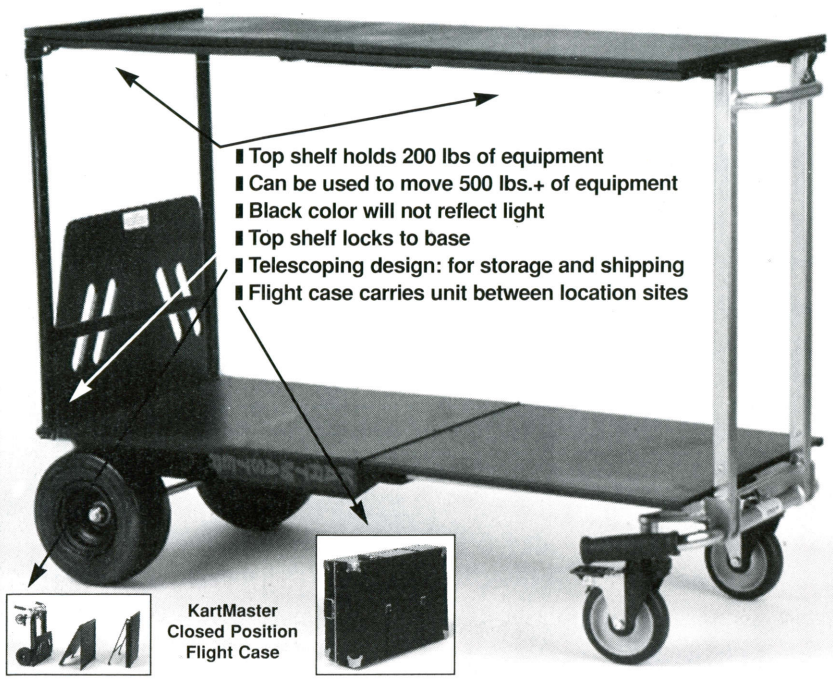

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fortable," Pratt notes with a laugh.

Making the rain visible required backlighting it with a massive Wendy Light parked a quarter-mile from the given scene. In addition, four 12' x 12' white sheets were used to bounce in 20Ks for front fill. The trickiest aspect of these sequences was doctoring all of the streetlamps that light the characters' rain-drenched walks in London's parks. "In the Fifties, you only had tungsten fixtures in the streetlights, whereas now we all have these very powerful sodium-vapor lights. Everywhere we went, we had to get the local council to switch off the normal streetlights so we could then add our own proper lights that were correct for the period. That was probably the biggest task for the electrical department."

Relighting London's Kew Green in itself merits a prize. Reflecting upon his Oscar nomination, Pratt says he was content to be in such good company: "Just being nominated by other directors of photography is the honor."

— Patricia Thomson

Robert Richardson, ASC
Snow Falling on Cedars

Nominated for both ASC and Academy Awards this year, director of photography Robert Richardson, ASC, studied film at the University of Vermont, the Rhode Island School of Design and the American Film Institute. After earning a master's degree from the AFI, he began shooting documentaries. Among his early visual efforts was a segment for *Crossfire* shot in El Salvador, which caught the eye of then-emerging director Oliver Stone. Stone subsequently hired Richardson to shoot the feature *Salvador*, the first of many collaborations between the two. Since then, Richardson has shot almost a dozen features for Stone, including *Platoon*, *Wall Street*, *Born*

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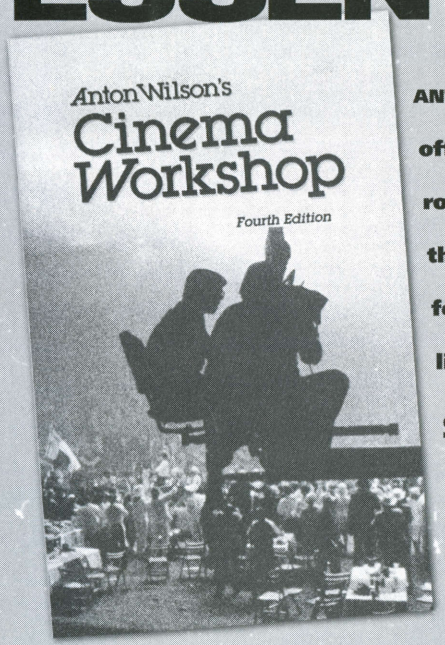

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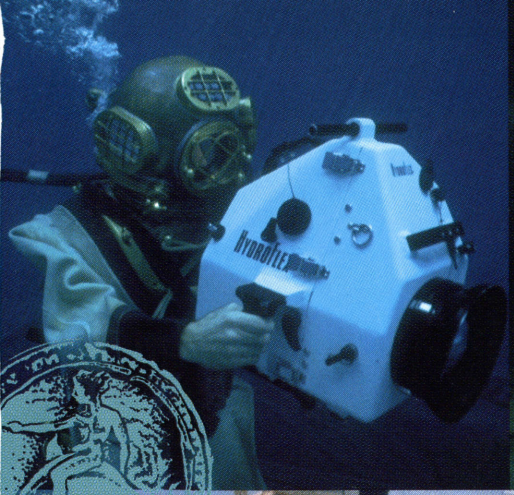
on the Fourth of July, *JFK*, *Heaven and Earth*, *Natural Born Killers* and *Nixon*. His other credits include *Eight Men Out* for John Sayles, *Casino* and *Bringing Out the Dead* for Martin Scorsese, and *Fast, Cheap and Out of Control* for Errol Morris.

Snow Falling on Cedars marks Richardson's sixth ASC Award nomination and his fourth Oscar nomination. His previous ASC nominations were for *The Horse Whisperer* (which also earned him nominations from the BSC and the Chicago Film Critics), *A Few Good Men*, *Born on the Fourth of July*, *JFK* and *Heaven and Earth*. Richardson won an Oscar for the groundbreaking cinematography he crafted for *JFK* in 1991, and he was also nominated for *Platoon* and *Born on the Fourth of July*.

Adapted from the acclaimed novel by David Guterson, *Snow Falling on Cedars* was directed by Scott Hicks, who gained international recognition in 1996 for *Shine* (see *AC* April '96, p. 75). Set in the 1950s in a tiny fishing town in the Pacific Northwest, Guterson's serpentine narrative unravels through several entwined stories that span two decades, which are presented via flashbacks of its central characters. Chief among these somewhat clouded recollections is the bittersweet love affair between a local reporter, Ishmael Chambers (Ethan Hawke), and Hatsue Miyamoto (Youki Kudoh), the young wife of a Japanese-American man standing trial for the murder of a local fisherman. We gradually discover that Ishmael's tortured relationship with Hatsue, her husband's trial, and the turbulent force of anti-Japanese sentiments during and after World War II are all inextricably intertwined.

"The whole film is about the process of revealing," Hicks said in an interview with the Web site Urban Cinefile (www.urbancinefile.com.au). "Nothing is quite what it appears to be; therefore, you never give it all away at once, but instead [reveal each



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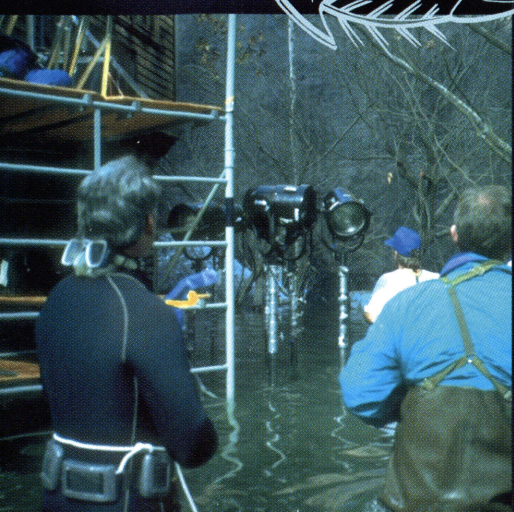

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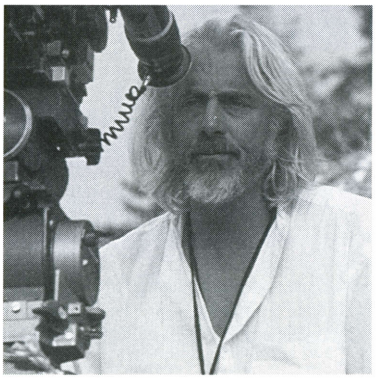

element] gradually. That was our guiding principle in the overall design of the film. The story is told through the gradual unraveling of several different mysteries: what happened at sea, in the war, [and between] Hatsue and Ishmael. I wanted the film to move seamlessly through its different time frames, like a knife through a slice of cake.

"The book has [tremendous amounts] of visual detail, [and] I had lots of Guterson's descriptions peppered through my script — wonderful descriptions of 'dank, dripping environments,' 'gray, leaden skies,' 'golden sunlight spilling onto a carpet,' and all that sort of thing. The challenge was to try and put those ingredients in front of the camera."

Of utmost importance to the filmmakers was finding an appropriately lush location where they could film the tale. After months of location scouting in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, the town of Greenwood, British Columbia, was chosen to represent part of the fictional fishing village of San Piedro. Located in the heart of the Canadian Rockies near the Washington border, Greenwood has a population of 800, century-old buildings and very little commerce. Additional photography — including the film's complex, fog-veiled, water-tank scenes — was executed on Sony Pictures stages in Culver City, California.

Hicks says that Richardson's body of work, coupled with the impression the latter made during their first meeting, made him certain that the acclaimed cinematographer was perfect for *Snow Falling on Cedars*. "Bob has such an extraordinary canon of work behind him," says Hicks. "All of his films have an extraordinarily spectacular but very individual look — there's nothing generic about the way they look. When I met him for the first time, there was a kind of magic that

Snow Falling on Cedars Unit photography by David James, courtesy of Universal Studios.

happens with some human beings; there are people you just know you're going to get on with. He's a very charismatic character, and we hit it off right off the bat."

In determining a look for the film, Richardson and Hicks began by examining still photographs from both the present and from the eras they would be depicting, including works by Harry Callahan and Robert Frank. According to Richardson, the duo then began discussing specific film references, which "ranged from Tarkovsky's *Mirror* to Bergman's *Hour of the Wolf* to Bertolucci's *The Conformist*. We established a language between us, and out of that language, we then went directly to the script [and the book]. Scott was the primary instigator of the film's look — he has an extraordinarily visual sensibility that is very formal and exact." Hicks notes that he and Richardson "found that we had this shared sensibility about the graphic design of the film."

Richardson photographed the drama with Panavision cameras and lenses and employed Eastman Kodak EXR 5293 for about 80 percent of the film. He also utilized the faster Vision 500T 5279 for some of the film's low-light interiors, as well as some slower-speed 100 ASA EXR 5248 for select exterior sequences.

Richardson and Hicks wanted to establish the film's haunting, almost lyrical tone in the striking, fog-enshrouded opening sequence. Shot in the water tank at Sony, the first image slowly materializes through a thick haze of dense mist: it is a death-like figure, reminiscent of a crucifix, which turns out to be a local fisherman stalled in his boat amid a "sea" of atmosphere. "One of the purposes of the scene was to visually represent one of the story's sources of tension, which I will crudely label 'Christian vs. Heathen,'" says Richardson. "That refers to a perception or attitude on the part of the German-American population in

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the area toward the Japanese. Despite the war against Germany, these white citizens were sitting in judgment of the Japanese-Americans. We often tried to visually represent the story's other themes in similar ways."

To create the scene, real fog was generated by the effects department, and Richardson and longtime gaffer Ian Kincaid rigged daylight-balanced Kino Flo fluorescent fixtures aimed through immense "sail cloths" of diffusion surrounding the tank to create soft, ambient, cool light. "With the proper underexposure, the [combination of light and atmospheric effects] became the gray of the fog. I was very pleased with the outcome," says the cinematographer.

One of the film's most visually compelling scenes is set in a hollowed-out cedar tree, where Ishmael and Hatsue hide out and secretly fall in love as adolescents. "A great deal of the power of that sequence was achieved unexpectedly," relates Richardson. "It was primarily due to the manner in which it was edited — the cross-cutting — as well as the layering of the sound. The scene plays out in the hollowed-out tree, their special place, and Scott layered imagery from not only when the characters were very young, but also from when they are adults. I think the erotic element of that combination was excellent. The entire forest, under the blanket of rain, was sublimely erotic. The scene's power is very much a tribute to Scott Hicks and [editor] Hank Corwin."

The cinematographer says he tried to light the sequence as naturally as possible. "[This] was mostly accomplished through rhythms of light and dark, ranging from silhouette to half light. When faces were vital, I lit in as natural a manner as possible. The light source was a large HMI bounced from a great distance off of a 20' x 20' muslin frame. On a preliminary scout, we found a first-growth cedar tree in Canada that was

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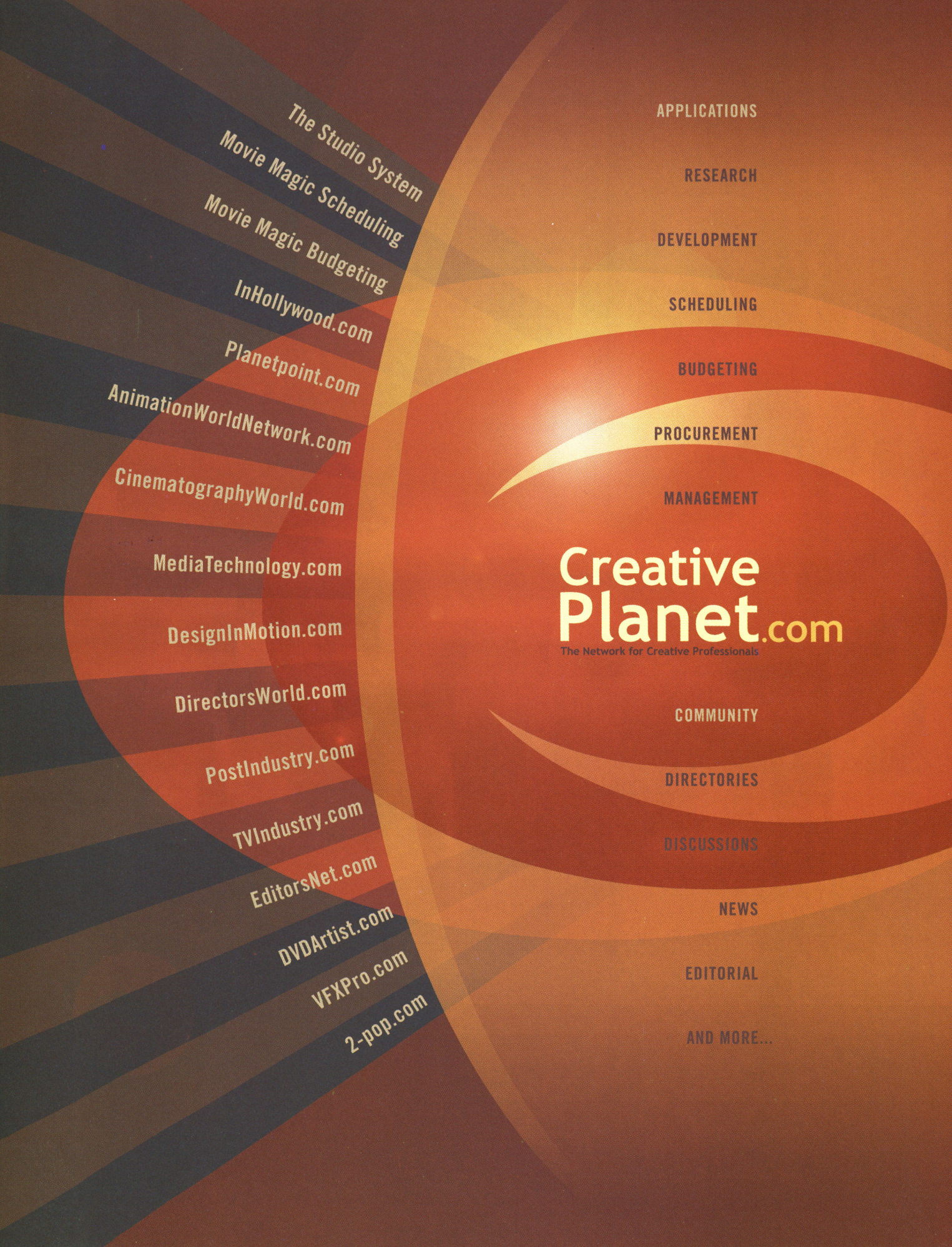
perfect for the forest exterior scenes, but we re-created the [hollowed-out] interior on a stage, because the real tree didn't have quite enough room to make it practical for filming."

Richardson says the sequence in which local Japanese-Americans are rounded up to be taken to an internment camp is another favorite. "That entire sequence is emotionally charged and powerful, [and] much of the imagery is based on what [Hicks and I] had discussed earlier, from pieces he collected as reference material," says Richardson. "Beyond that, Scott had met a number of Japanese-Americans who were children when the internment took place and who had been held at Manzanar [Relocation Center in California]. They served as extras in [that sequence], so the atmosphere was very emotional."

The cameraman modestly credits Hicks with much of the film's visual richness, and says he thinks of himself as "a great collaborator. I bring a lot of ideas to the table and present them in such a way that they can be thrown away or realized, and to me it makes very little difference either way. I have a perspective, but I'm not aggressive, because that's not beneficial to the film."

Richardson recently told *The Boston Globe* that critics' negative reaction to *Snow Falling on Cedars* was a tremendous disappointment. "I brought a great deal to this film — the quality of saturation, the layering of the blacks. There's a lot of poetry to the visuals, and I love the way they [were edited] into rhythms that are very much like music. I was so sure the world would love it. It's like a classic timepiece — magnificent to look at, with brilliant workings inside — but the critics baked it alive. It was devastating."

Nevertheless, several critics' associations bestowed their 1999 awards for cinematography on Richardson for his photography. He won awards from the Chicago Film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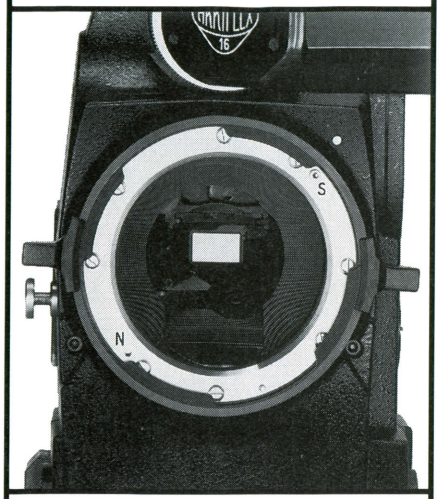

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Critics, the Florida Film Critics, the Las Vegas Film Critics Society and the Dallas-Fort Worth Film Critics Association, as well as a Golden Satellite Award nomination.

— Christopher Probst

Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC
The Insider

The Insider brought Dante Spinotti, ASC, AIC, his third ASC Award nomination and his second Academy Award nomination for cinematography. In 1992, the cameraman was nominated for an ASC Award for *The Last of the Mohicans*, and in 1997, he received ASC and Oscar nominations for *L.A. Confidential*. A drama about a *60 Minutes* producer's efforts to get a former tobacco-industry executive to go public with what he knows, *The Insider* is Spinotti's fourth collaboration with director Michael Mann, following *Manhunter* (1986), *The Last of the Mohicans* and *Heat* (1995).

Spinotti, a native of northern Italy, began his career in television at RAI. He also apprenticed for his uncle at KENIA as a cinematographer. In 1985, producer Dino De Laurentiis offered Spinotti the cinematographer's chair on *Manhunter*, his first job on an American film. Since then, he has photographed almost 20 films.

The Insider stars Russell Crowe as Jeffrey Wigand, the former executive who becomes a whistleblower, and Al Pacino as *60 Minutes* producer Lowell Bergman. In order to lend the "ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances" premise a sense of tension and mystery, Spinotti and Mann devised an innovative approach that emphasized tightly framed shots and plenty of handheld camera. The shooting seems spontaneous, but it was carefully planned every step of the way. "When working with Michael Mann, movement and framing belong strictly to Michael Mann," says Spinotti. "As far as camera composition, it's more about preproduction. Michael plans all of the shots way before the whole movie starts, and every single camera used has to deal with the character's emotional state at that emotional stage of the story.

"Some lighting situations in *The Insider* required some sort of 'inner' lighting or 'inner' framing," he continues. "We really tried to get into the psyches of the characters. For some of those close shots, we used the Frazier lens, which allowed us to keep the foreground and background in focus in the same frame. This also [created a need] to build up light levels much higher. [Kodak's] Vision 500 film helped make shots like that match in the middle of a sequence."

In keeping with the film's realistic, handheld approach, Spinotti was careful to keep the imagery from becoming too flawless. "We didn't want to add an edge of perfection to the movie," he says. "We used the Vision 500T 5279 for a good part of the film, and the [Vision] 250D [5246], which I quite like. For print film, we used the regular Vision. I had used the Vision Premier print stock for *Wonder Boys* because there were advantages with [that film's] Super 35 format. But for *The Insider*, we did some testing in postproduction and Michael preferred Vision. We didn't want the look to be too glossy and perfect."

Spinotti often employed multiple cameras, reasoning that a film with so much important dialogue would stand or fall on the actors' performances. "For the scene in the hotel in Louisville, when the two main characters first come together, we had two cameras on each actor. There was a tight over, a single close-up, and also a wider over. This way, when Michael has the kind of performance he's looking for, he has it covered two ways," he notes.

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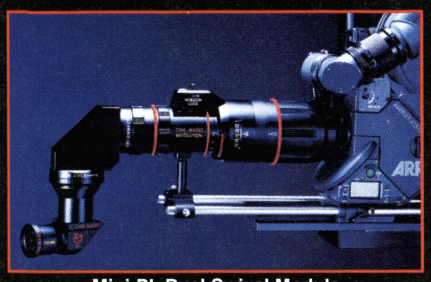

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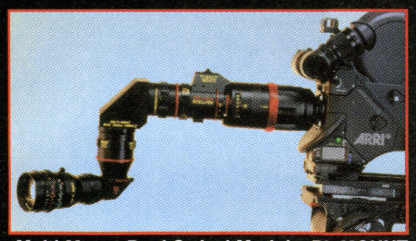

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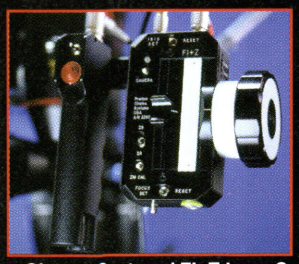

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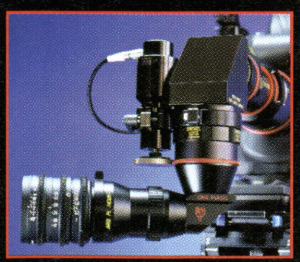

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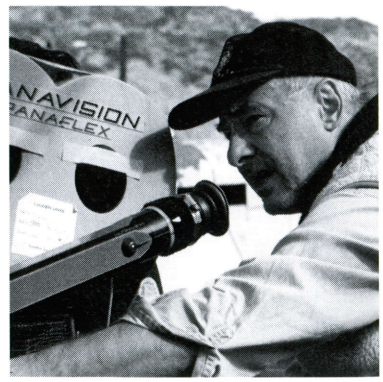
"It's tricky to light those scenes, because the backlight for one camera becomes the frontlight for the other. But I like to do that, because it plays to the performance later on — your sequence becomes so complex, so tight and so artful because of the quality of the performances."

Several sequences take place in Bergman's bedroom, which has floor-to-ceiling windows along two walls and a commanding view of a lush forest. Showing the audience the full vista without losing any details in the actors' faces or the interior of the room required a balancing act on Spinotti's part. "We had a challenging time there, because in the same day we were supposed to shoot day, day-for-night, and night sequences," Spinotti recalls. "We had to count on the gels we put on the windows for balance and color temperature. We had the exterior trees pre-lit for the night scenes, [and they] were also rigged with ropes for special effects. The trees are always moving, and that isn't wind! We had a huge amount of light in back of there, too, from HMI units. One of those shots was also made with the Frazier lens, so again, higher lighting levels were necessary."

On his last several pictures, Spinotti and his crew, including gaffer Jeff Petersen, have developed a lighting system to use on location. It consists of strips of tiny Par 16 bulbs mounted in 4', 6' or 8' lengths, or in circles, depending on the shot. These are usually mounted in the corner of a room and controlled by dimmers. If a shot "sees" the entire room, there is a method for controlling frontlight and backlight. "We call them 'DNA lights' because they are the source for all lighting," says Spinotti. "We use them in a variety of situations, from close-ups to masters. Once I learned how to work to get the effects I wanted on faces, I could focus these lights across faces, and I could direct them from behind to have some toplight. They were long enough to wrap nicely and to carry some sort of top and front light. They gave me a kind of lighting I can only describe as 'nonexistent.' I could have areas of intense light [and] keep them separate from the shadow areas. They are very easy to work with. This technique produces a hard light, but it doesn't create shapes because of the many bulbs — it changes if you hold it horizontally or vertically, on one side or the other."

Spinotti emphasizes that all the decisions made during the production of a film must be based on a common understanding of the film's inner workings. "To me, making a movie is understanding the language of that particular film," he says. "You have to combine many elements, and every decision adds to

The Insider Unit photography by Frank Connor, courtesy of Touchstone Pictures.



and influences the language of the film. Michael was very concerned [about avoiding] a kind of 'TV movie' approach, where the story is told very simply and classically. He wanted to reach a different level; he wanted to go into the human values revealed by this event and visually represent that. So every minute detail — the shape of a pair of glasses, the color of a tie — is fundamental.

"What I have always liked about Michael is his ability to be aggressive with the material, to grab the material and make the most dynamic, cinematic film out of it, rather than lying back and covering things in the classic manner. The camera becomes a storytelling tool in a very aggressive way."

— David Heuring

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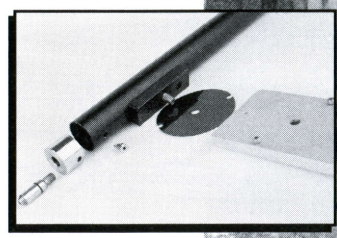

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Night Terrors

Cinematographer David Eggby, ACS, crafts an eerie, otherworldy ambience for the sci-fi thriller *Pitch Black*.

by Ron Magid

Unit photography by Sean Barnes

Arguably the most ambitious Australian film ever made, *Pitch Black*, a unique science-fiction thriller released this past February, brought blockbuster-style thrills to movie theaters several months early. The film, directed by David Twohy, dramatizes the fate of a ragtag group of marooned space travelers on a lifeless, sun-scorched world during a total eclipse. In the darkness of that seemingly never-ending night, the tale's heroes, led by Fry (Radha Mitchell), Johns (Cole Hauser) and "reformed" criminal Riddick (Vin Diesel), confront their worst nightmare when the alien world erupts with nocturnal life, sparking a grim battle for survival.

For director of photography David Eggby, ACS, who has shot such big-budget American fare as *Dragonheart* (see *AC* June '96) and *Daylight* (both for director Rob Cohen), *Pitch Black* was a return to his roots: the edgy science-fiction film was shot in some of the same parts of Australia where he had photographed the first *Mad Max* picture many years before. But Twohy's film presented some very new challenges for Eggby, such as trying to create an alien-looking world in sunlight and shadow while shooting Down Under. Fortunately, he had full support from the director, whom he had met when he shot Twohy's script *Warlock* for director Steve Miner. "David and I knew each other, which helps, and he wanted something different," Eggby says. "He was prepared to give anything a go, so I could throw all caution to the wind. It was up to me to make it happen, to create the look of the film. It was a fairly collaborative working effort, and it paid off."

Eggby persuaded Twohy to shoot the film in widescreen. "I felt strongly that we needed a Cinemascope format," Eggby says. "We didn't shoot anamorphic; we shot Super 35 using Panavision cameras with the common center 2.35:1 aspect ratio spherical lenses."

Pitch Black begins with a bang-up opening sequence in which the massive spaceship carrying our heroes crash-lands on the desert planet (see lighting diagram and story in *AC* March '00). It's a visceral, powerful intro that takes the audience on a truly terrifying ride. "It was important from the first shot that the audience felt they were in the action," Eggby agrees. "The thing is, how do you create a spacecraft in turmoil, apart from the acting and moving the set?"

Eggby's answer was to place a crane on some scaffolding adjacent to the spacecraft set, which was on a gimbal in a soundstage at Warner Bros. Studios in Queensland. "That way, we could shoot a lot of the shots on the crane arm, which allowed the gimbal set to move around the camera, the crane and the remote head," the cinematographer recalls. "We also wanted a huge amount of camera shake, but my concern was if I tried to create that on the camera or on a remote head, we'd break everything! I used an image shaker from Clairmont Camera, which is a great

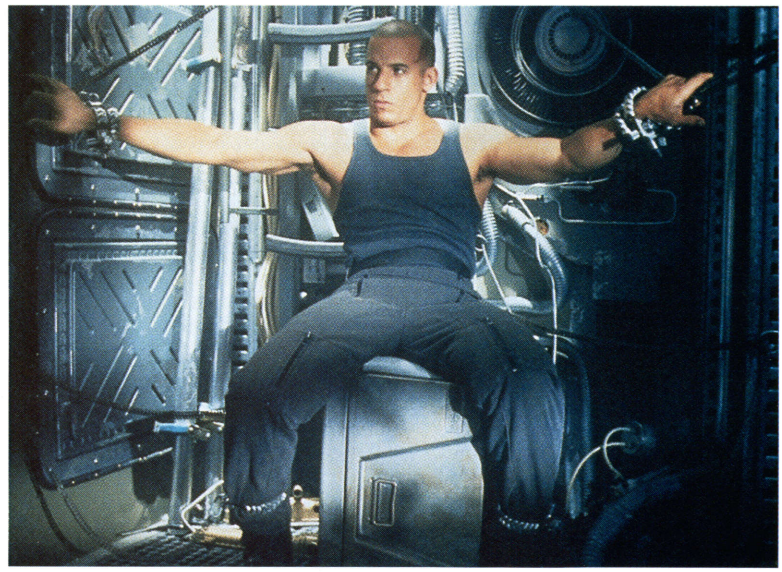
Photos courtesy of Universal Studios.

rig that sits in front of the lens; it has two facets of glass that move in opposition to each other. The image shaker allowed us to dial in different degrees of 'earthquake,' 'shake' or 'rocky road' without having to shake the hell out of the camera. Also, on a few shots, I used a Mesmerizer, an anamorphic adapter that sits on the front of the spherical lens and stretches the image."

When it came to lighting the interior of the spacecraft for the crash, Twohy once again gave Eggby free rein. "Very little of the lighting was incorporated in the ship, but I was able to hide my sources," the cinematographer recalls. "The set was well-designed for lighting by the production designer, Graham 'Grace' Walker. The spacecraft had a lot of different facets and textures, and it allowed for lighting through ceilings. Since it was a gimbal set, it was very difficult to utilize floor lighting, but there was some ground-row lighting incorporated in the ship. I placed a lot of strobe lights and pulsing lights in and around the interior of the spacecraft. It all worked great when we came in hard."

Probably the most memorable aspect of *Pitch Black*'s photography are the radical extremes Eggby employs to create the startling contrast between the alien world's harsh daylight and the nightmarish darkness caused by the eclipse that occurs every 22 years, when the planet's red and blue suns align. "It's a film of extremes," Eggby concurs. "We start in the blackest of black spaceships being shaken to bits. Then we crash-land on a bleached, arid planet, and from there we progress from dark to *complete* darkness. This project really did use all the extremes of lighting — that's what was so great about it."

The extraordinary look of the alien planet in sunlight, with its bleached-yellow, overexposed quality, was inspired by a commercial Twohy had seen. "I knew that the



A band of marooned space travelers must combat vicious airborne aliens after crash-landing on a sun-scorched planet in *Pitch Black*. The creatures, who are repelled by light, emerge from their underground lair during a solar eclipse. Opposite page, from left: Keith David, Rhiana Griffith, Radha Mitchell and Vin Diesel desperately attempt to fend off the flying predators with bottled glow-worms. This page, top and middle photos: Diesel plays Riddick, a reformed criminal who leads the pack. Bottom photo: Mitchell plays a pilot, Fry, who displays true grit in a crisis.

Night Terrors

Right: After the violent crash landing, Paris (Lewis Fitz-Gerald) scouts out the alien terrain. Below: After escaping his chains, Riddick tracks his captors.

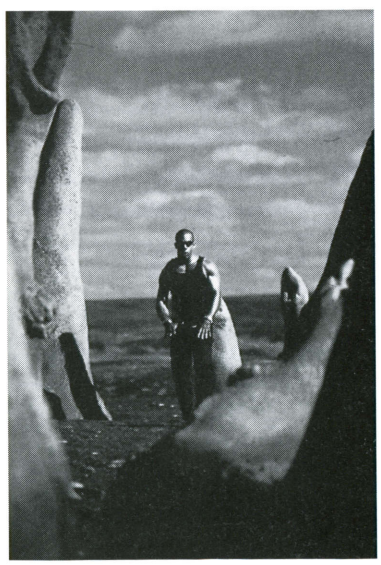
only way to achieve the look was through video telecine, where they could take out colors and change the contrast," Eggby says. "But you can't do those sorts of things on film unless you digitize it, and of course, the prospect of doing that was out of the question."

It was Twohy who suggested using the bleach-bypass process to alter the reality of the film's terrestrial setting, but everything Eggby knew about the technique mitigated against using it to create the desired effect. "I had not used bleach-bypass before, so I asked around, and then got online and began delving into the problems associated with bypassing the bleaches in the process stage. Normally, the bleach is used to remove all of the unwanted chemicals and silvers and things, giving you your normal negative. When you don't bleach, all of that stuff is left in, so your negative is very, very thick. I soon worked out that the cinematographers who had used the bleach-bypass were going for a dark look, which was exactly the opposite of what we wanted! Everything I read and heard about it [proved that it was] the opposite of what I wanted to do on this picture."

Eggby's challenge therefore became how to use bleach-bypass to effectively create the blanched quality Twohy envisioned for the planet's daylight look. "Since we were planning to shoot in the desert, I tried to find an environment for testing that was very close to it visually," he reveals. "I wound up spending three weeks doing various tests at a dirt quarry not far from the production office. I tested some Kodak stocks, and one thing that was consistent with what I'd read about bleach-bypass is that the higher-speed stocks handle it less well, while the slower-speed stocks seem to lend themselves to it better. The one that handled it the best was [Kodak EXR] 5245."

Even so, Eggby found that there were problems with using the

bleach-bypass technique for more than just a scene or two: "The process is very uncontrollable and very inconsistent, so you never know exactly what you're going to end up with from day to day. The exterior shots were for continuous scenes, which were filmed over a period of days and weeks in various lighting conditions, like any movie. Fortunately, who knows what an alien planet with red and blue suns is like, anyway? It's total fantasy. Although we needed a red hue and a blue hue, because there were supposedly 12 hours of orange and 12 hours of blue light, I found that the less filtration [there was] in front of the



lens, the more consistent the bleach-bypass was."

The cinematographer's solution was simple and effective: "Instead of just putting red or blue filters on the lens, which would have been a pretty hokey, ordinary way of doing things, I used a fair amount of filtration in front of the lighting units. Normally, you can utilize Mother Nature very well while filming live action in the desert; you'd light exteriors with silks and HMIs and whatever. But there we were, in the middle of the desert doing daylight scenes, and I was using large, warm-colored tungsten 20Ks and Maxi-Brutes with orange filters in front of them.

"For the blue light, we'd just use large HMIs through blue gels, but I also used as much orange light and gold reflectors as I could to fill in, because bleach-bypass work is all about contrast. For instance, bleach-bypass does not work great when you're shooting a person wearing a white suit against a white wall, because it works more on contrast ratio than light distribution. Of course, when it's sunny, you get more natural contrast with shadows, anyway."

Of course, it wasn't sunny when Eggby was shooting *Pitch Black* on location in the southern Australia desert location of Coober Pedy. "When we got there, the weather was overcast and very wet, we had a lot of rain, and it was very cold," Eggby recalls. "The irony was that the bleach-bypass actually enhanced that and gave us the look we wanted! Because a lot of the weather was overcast, I lit as harshly as I could — we had to use hard lighting [in order to] get as much contrast into the images as possible. If we had gone there and filmed normally, using a filter pack instead of the bleach-bypass, the scenes would have looked pretty ordinary, but the effect of the bypass really made it *something*. Even in an overcast environment, that

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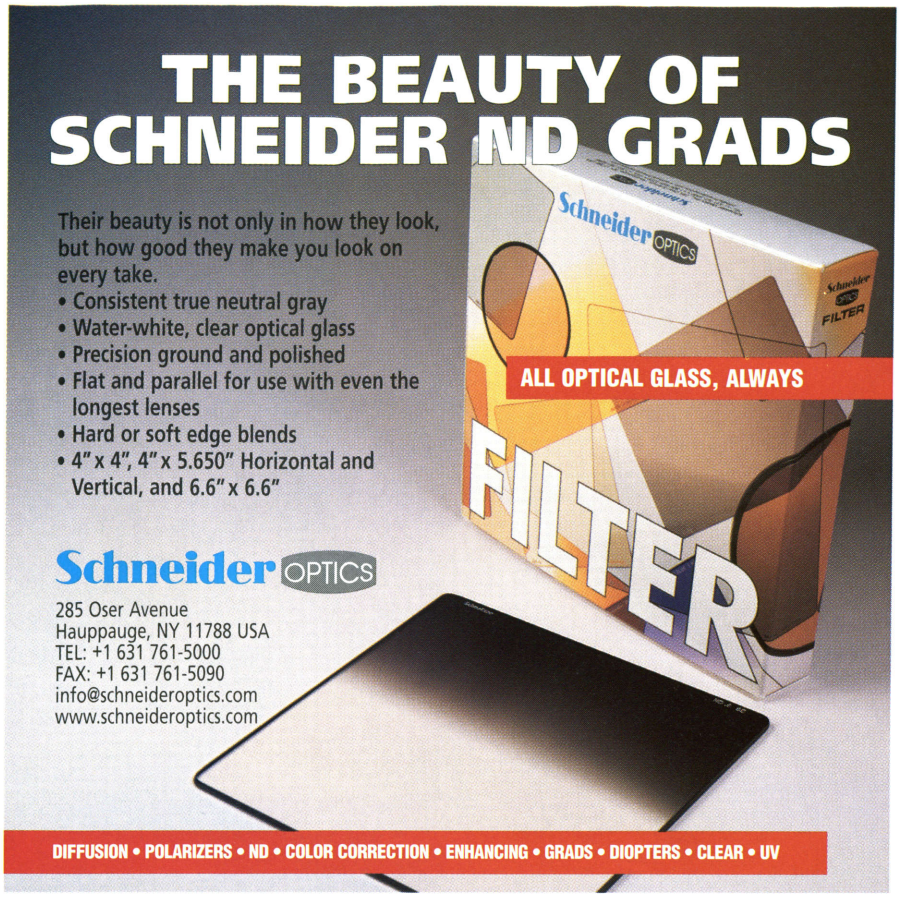

Night Terrors

technique gave the imagery a special quality."

In order to beef up the contrast, Eggby took two very unorthodox approaches to his material in the lab: "First, I relied heavily on Atlab and our color timer, Leigh Nichols. She knew what I was after, and varied her printing lights accordingly. Sometimes the printer lights were very high to give me the look I wanted. And when we came to the final grading [timing] stage, which we did at CFI in Los Angeles, Dan Moscarella, the head timer there, actually put extra trims in the printer lights to print through the dense negative, which added to that great contrast.

"Second, *we bleach-bypassed the original negative*! That is almost taboo and unheard of, because all other films do it on the interpositive. I felt [that the characters] should only be in this environment when they were outside; when they went inside, I thought the images shouldn't be bleach-bypassed. However, you can't do that with an interpositive, because you have to do the whole reel — and, therefore, every scene. But if we did it to the original negative, which we cut in with all of the normally processed footage, I thought the effect would be strongest. The bleach-bypass itself had a radical effect on the negative, but the bigger the risk, the bigger the payback."

In keeping with Eggby's lighting extremes, the brilliant, slightly overexposed alien day quickly fades into an extraordinarily black night. "It had to happen quickly to get the shot," Eggby notes. "For budgeting and scheduling reasons, we couldn't do a gradual eclipse that led into the night. We only did about three night exterior shots of the desert location, when the actors first leave their spacecraft with this strange sled and all these fiber-optic lights. The rest of the movie was filmed on stage at Warner Bros. Studios in Queensland.

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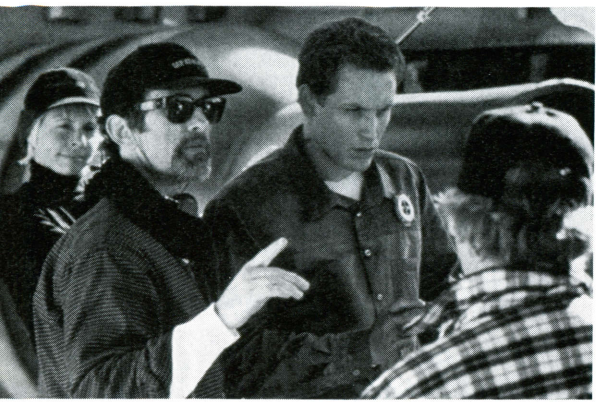
Night Terrors



Director-screenwriter David Twohy (in glasses) preps his cast and crew.

We had one stage that we dressed as the desert location, which was basically a big dirt pile. Grace Walker brought in tons and tons of soil and built up gullies and a ravine that was about 40' high. We were able to make it look a lot deeper and bigger than it was with wide-angle lenses.

"I also asked the art department to build a false horizon using plywood cutouts of mountains to create an irregular horizon line that was only a couple of feet high. I then positioned ground-row lights with black drapes behind them, which gave us an illuminated, black-on-black feel. I had to have backlight for the rain sequences at night — otherwise, you wouldn't see the rain. The black backdrop was fairly underexposed on the film stock, but to the human eye, there is a faint horizon line visible. I tried to create 'movie darkness,' which still had shape and form but was also fairly underexposed and minimal, as opposed to real blackness, where you wouldn't see anything. Movie night has to have something, but it can be minimal. It's a case of less-is-more. I think the audience would have gotten pretty bored with total blackness."

While the daylight exteriors were shot using Kodak EXR 5245, Eggby went with Kodak EXR 5298, a 500 ASA tungsten stock, to create the opposite look for *Pitch Black*'s terrifying night scenes. "Because the film was about extremes, I had to use extreme stocks," he maintains. The cinematographer employed darkness to great advantage, skillfully hiding most of the film's budgetary limitations. "We did all the shots of the actors trekking across the desert and running in the rain on stage, because who knows which direction you're going or where you are when it's night?" Eggby points out. "It's really a trekking movie; they've got to go from one location to the next and back again. Utilizing the same center of the stage, we had the actors walk from corner to corner. Then we shut those lights off, turned others on, and had them turn around and walk back the other way."

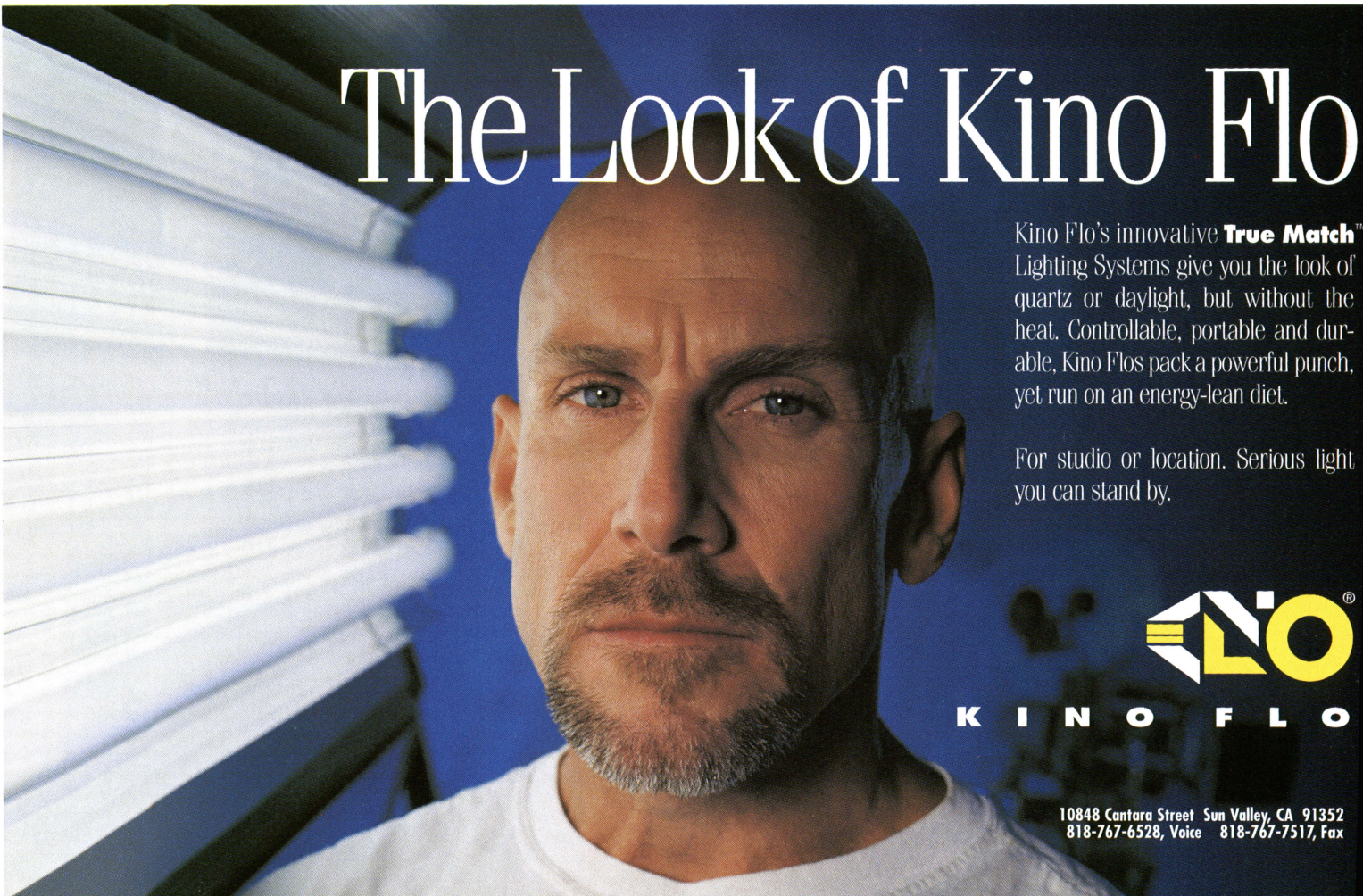
The mandate was to make the 'night' look as black as possible,

which for Eggby meant lighting from the inside out. "Generally, most movie night scenes are lit with Musco Lights and large lamp sources on cherry pickers and Condors — from the outside in," he elaborates. "Our scenes had to be lit from the center out, so you'd think the lights they were holding were the main sources, and the blacks would just drop off from there. It had to be that way, because these creatures were repelled by light. That's the reason the blacks look so black."

Eggby also had to vary the means by which our heroes keep the vicious aliens at bay. "We started with a fiber-optic system that we imported from D.N. Labs, Inc. in the United States," Eggby recalls. "The characters supposedly extract those lights from the 'guts' of the spaceship. The fiber-optics don't last long in the storyline, but they gave us the chance to do something different visually — we didn't want the actors to just come out of the spacecraft with flashlights. We had lots of different ideas about how to illuminate these people, beginning with the fiber-optics. When those are eliminated, they use acetylene torches to protect themselves. They then end up burning their liquor like Molotov cocktails, and finally it gets to the point where they're using glowing alien worms that they find on the ceiling of a cave."

The glowing worms created the biggest lighting task. "The art department made these little silicone worms, then injected the liquid from cyallum sticks into them," Eggby explains. "The film was sensitive enough to register the glowing cyallum worms, but it couldn't register the light they gave off, so the worms couldn't really illuminate the actors' faces. Whenever you see the characters running around with those bottles full of worms, I had up to four Mini-Flo lamps, which are 4" Kino Flo fluorescent tubes, wired in unison and hidden at the back of the bottles, along with little reflectors and battery leads. Of course, I also had little lights hidden all over the set. I would often be next to the camera, aiming a little flashlight to light up the actors' faces.

"I love a challenge," Eggby concludes, "and we just *knew* that the visual style of *Pitch Black* was going to be different. Sometimes we'd look at the bleach-bypass dailies and think, 'Wow! This stuff may be paying off.' As far as I know, this is the only movie that's ever bleach-bypassed the original negative. We took the bull by the horns and said, 'Screw it. Let's give them something they've never seen before.'" ■



Wet and Wild

Cinematographer Oliver Wood illuminates stormy seas in *U-571*, a tense submarine thriller directed by Jonathan Mostow.

by Douglas Bankston

Unit photography by Mario Tursi

In Universal Pictures' recent World War II nautical thriller *U-571*, crew members of the vintage WWI American submarine S-33 rendezvous with and board a stranded German U-boat, the U-571, in order to steal an "Enigma Cipher," a typewriter-like piece of equipment that encrypts and decodes German transmissions. However, during the theft, another member of the German Wolfpack torpedoes and destroys the American sub, forcing the surviving Americans to use the U-571 to escape from the German naval forces that are rapidly converging.

In helming this heroic adventure film, director Jonathan Mostow (*Breakdown*) recruited an experienced production crew that included cinematographer Oliver Wood — a veteran of such action-adventure features as *Die Hard 2: Die Harder*, *Terminal Velocity*, *Face/Off* and *Switchback* — to brave salty sea elements and unpredictable winds. Using one of the massive water tanks

Photos courtesy of Universal Studios.

Opposite page: Standing aboard the U-571, S-33 executive officer Lt. Andrew Tyler (Matthew McConaughey) watches his ship erupt in flames after a torpedo hit. Lighting for this sequence was supplemented by numerous Italian-made Maxi-Brutes. This page, left: Submerged in the U-571, Eddie the cook (T.C. Carson), Lt. Tyler and Rabbit (Will Estes) await the oncoming depth charges dropped by a German destroyer. To simulate the teeth-rattling effect of the explosives, the submarine set was dropped repeatedly on a gimbal. During filming of the sequence, all of the bulbs in the Arriflex Peppers used to light the interior shattered. Below: Despite the many logistical difficulties they faced, director Jonathan Mostow (left) and cinematographer Oliver Wood kept the *U-571* production on course.

at MFS Film Studios on the island of Malta, Wood and a largely Italian crew illuminated full-sized, floating American and German submarine mock-ups for the dramatic theft of the Cipher machine, which takes place during a heavy rainstorm. "I brought my American gaffer, Jimmy Crawford, and key grip, Michael Travers," Wood says. "Everybody else was Italian."

The water-tank sequence spanned several weeks of night shooting and involved a man-made torrential rainstorm with rough seas, lightning and strong gusts of wind. Mother Nature supplied the wind, but the waves, lightning effects and rain were created by the crew. "You start with the waves," Wood explains. "There would be four wave machines in four different corners of the tank. It would take three to five minutes for the waves to get up to par. Then we'd start the rain from the towers, cue the lightning machines, and roll the cameras. It was spectacular. Every take would be a huge wind-up and a big wind-down, but we shot on schedule."

Rain was splattered across the set mainly by two gigantic rain cranes, supplemented by smaller rain towers interspersed around the tank. Wind meters monitored wind speed, because the cranes could buckle in winds that reached or exceeded 20 miles per hour. When the Maltese

Wet and Wild

Wood opted for a type of omnipresent "nowhere" light during the stormy boarding sequence. Three-quarter backlight was generated by two homemade Musco lights attached to 150' Condor cranes. Each lighting unit contained 15 4K Pars gelled with 1/4 CTO and 1/4 Green.

winds did build to that intensity, which was practically every night, the rain cranes were shut off and allowed to swing free.

Wood describes his approach to lighting two submarines, with sailors on deck in the middle of a storm, as a type of "nowhere" light. "It was always a back three-quarter light, which works best at night," he details. "That was created by two homemade Musco lights, which were on 150-foot Condors. They each carried 15 4K Pars and were gelled with ¼ CTO and ¼ green. I liked the way that looked, and most of the lights were gelled like that. The Condors were up as high as we could get them, which was a constant problem, because the tank was on the edge of a cliff and the winds hit speeds of up to 40 miles per hour. The cranes would sway in the wind, and we didn't have any crew members in them. It got pretty crazy.

"We would send somebody up in them at the beginning of the night to tune them up and focus them according to the night's work. Then we'd bring him down and put the cranes up again in the same position. If I needed to change anything, I'd do it after lunch. According to what the camera angle was, we'd use all 15 Pars on one side when that was the key, and about eight on the other side. It was just a general light; [the sequence] takes place during a storm, so there was no real direction to the light at all. We added two 18Ks on the ground in the same area [as the Condors] because it was all toplight, and we needed some light coming from the ground at the same angle.

"All night long things wouldn't work, and every single night the cameras broke down. We had a mechanic from Technovision Rome who was sometimes working 24 hours a day to keep everything going."

"After that, we began working on the next level of light," Wood continues. "For everything near the rain cranes, we tried to use arc lights as much as possible, because the rain was salt-water rain, and HMIs didn't last very long — they just flickered out after a while. We carried about eight or nine arc lights with us, and we strung them around in pairs, along with some singles that were placed in the water and on parallels at the edge of the tank. We put them where we needed them for each shot, and that provided the crosslight needed for the front area. The arc lights threw shadows, but we seemed to get away with it. All of these lights were covered with very heavy rain protection, which had to be constantly renewed. Also, the salt would collect on the gels and add another layer of filtration, so the light got weaker and weaker as we went along. We constantly had to renew the gels.

"Basically, all the light from the big Musco-type lights was back three-quarter, while the arcs threw some side light. The only front light was provided by a 20' by 20' Griffolyn bounce, into which we aimed an arc light. I basically worked at a stop of T3.5 throughout the whole sequence. I had two [Lightning Strikes units] up on towers — one on each side — that were strategically placed for each shot. Actually, I had three lightning machines, [but] one of them never worked! One was always being repaired because the salt water just destroyed everything! At times, I shot with only one machine working. All night long things wouldn't work, and every single night the cameras broke down. We had a spare [camera] and spare [circuit] boards, and we had a mechanic from Technovision Rome who was sometimes working 24 hours a day to keep everything going."

Wood had a small arsenal of cameras at his disposal, including Arriflex 535s and 435s, and a selection of Cooke S4 lenses. At the time of production, however, Cooke had yet to fabricate a 40mm lens for its new series of optics. "I used a 40mm from the old Cooke series, and it cut

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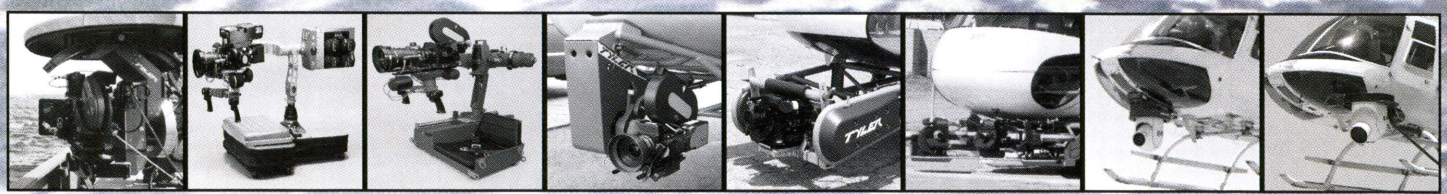

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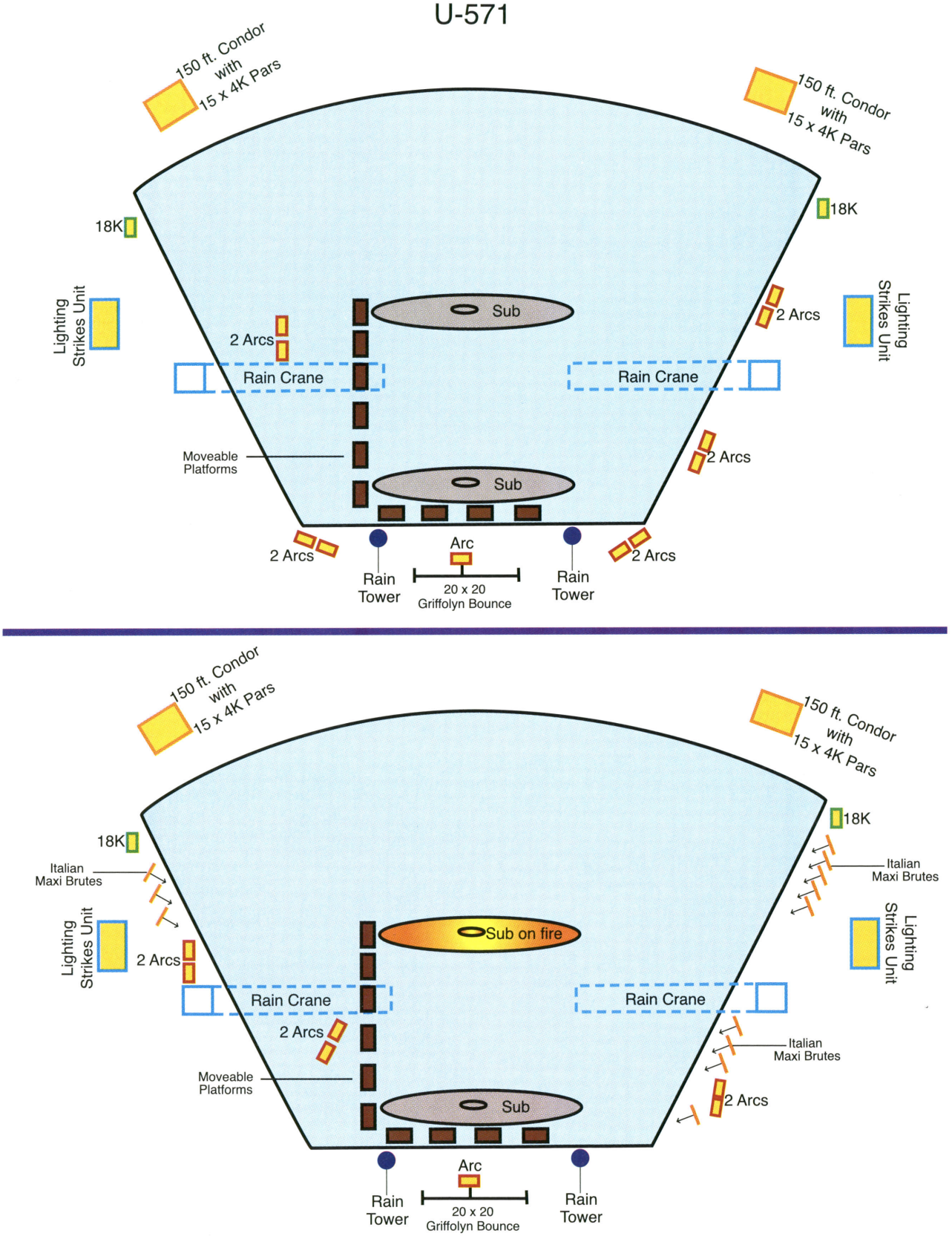

MALTA WATERTANK

very well," the cinematographer attests. "The whole package was beautiful." In addition to the S4s, Cooke zooms were frequently used, as well as Nikon's 200mm and 400mm telephoto lenses. Wood photographed the sequence on Kodak's 500T Vision 5279 stock, which he rated at 400 ASA and processed normally. No filters were employed.

The camera crew was entirely Italian, with Daniele Massaccesi and Gian Maria Majorana operating the two main cameras. "We had three cameras all the way through this sequence, except on some of the shots where we were closer in and there was only room for two handheld cameras," Wood points out. "Everything in this movie was virtually handheld, except for a few crane shots. We had to wrap the cameras in plastic bags, and it took 10 to 15 minutes to break it all down, reload a 400-foot mag and put it all back together again.

"We all wore heavy rain gear all the time. The operators were constantly soaked — it was a nightmare, actually. We made airblowers for the front of the cameras to blow air across a clear glass filter in order to keep the rain away. We still had problems, and takes were often spoiled by raindrops. However, there were a couple of sequences where the shot was so great that we gave it to [the] visual effects [department], and they removed [the drops] digitally.

"For close-ups," he elaborates, "I always had a camera light. It was just a small light with a blue gel to match the other stuff at a very low level — really an eye light more than anything."

For the occasional crane shot, Wood opted for a local crane known as the Robbin and a Technocrane. "[The Technocrane] played deep into the set," he says. "We rolled it out on platforms. We had probably 30 movable platforms [out of the shot] that we arranged in various orders,

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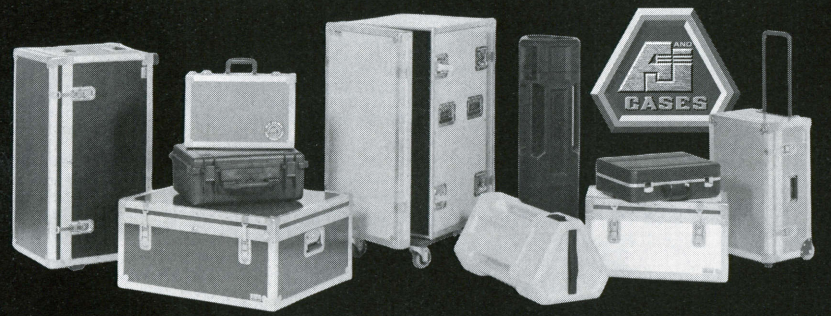

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Wet and Wild

like a jigsaw puzzle, to determine the best ways to place cameras and walk people out to the submarines. I often put lights on them, too. The Robbin crane was used more than the Technocrane, because we liked having an operator actually on it. We wanted the camera moving all the time, and we got better results with an operator.

"I think we rented the Technocrane out to Ridley Scott, who was doing *Gladiator* [nearby]. We could see them up the road! They had two big Wendy lights up in the sky, but we had far more s**t flying up!" he says with a laugh. "Sometimes our rainstorm would be so strong that the wind would blow the rain all the way to their set, half a mile down the coast."

At the point where the American submarine exploded from a torpedo hit, Wood altered his extensive lighting setup to reflect the fiery blast, adding a number of warmly gelled, Italian-version Maxi-Brutes. The Italian Maxi-Brute consists of 1Ks in banks of eight, whereas its American counterpart is made up of nine or 12 1Ks. "We used Maxi-Brutes because we had to put them all on dimmers, and you can't really dim a light that's any stronger than a 1K light. They were all on hand-dimmer systems. The other setup of arcs and big Musco-type lights remained exactly the same. The bounce became unnecessary, because the firelight served as the fill. There was real fire on the submarine, and many of the Maxi-Brutes had firebars in front of them. I always put firebars in front of the lights to add more flicker."

The submarine interiors offered little relief from the tortuous, watery conditions that prevailed on the exterior shoot. For scenes set within the sub, the production shifted to Rome's Cinecitta Studios, where an enormous, 220' U-boat set and a portion of the S-33 were constructed entirely of metal in

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Wet and Wild

Rain cranes, supplemented by these smaller rain towers, were used to create inclement weather in the massive water tanks at MFS Film Studios.

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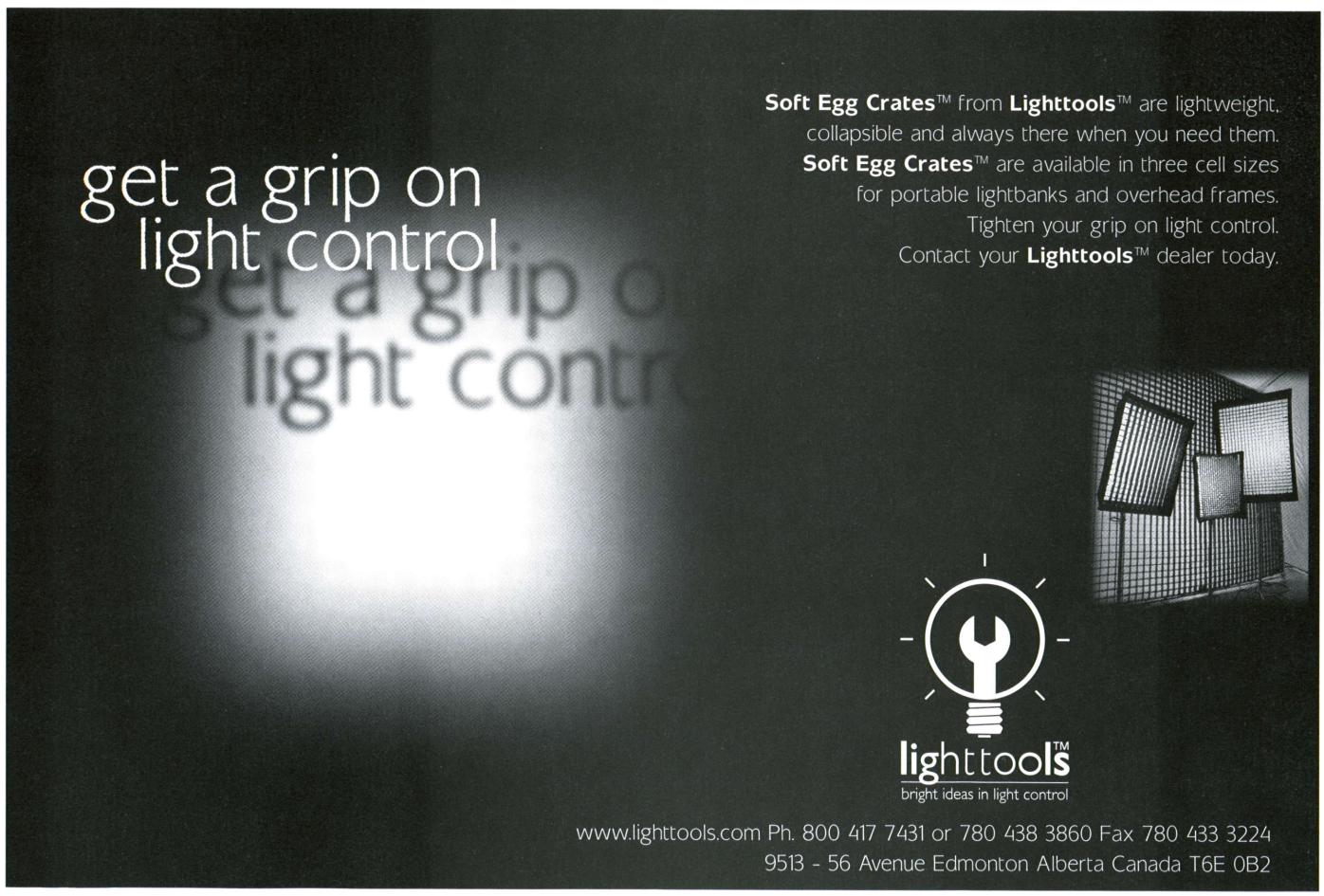
sections slightly larger than original military specifications. These sections were lifted by crane as needed and placed onto a gimbal situated in a water tank. "We used the gimbal for a lot of the depth-charging," Wood details. "We just dropped the whole set. At the same time, we had Technovision camera shakers. They built them out of a drill motor with steel plates, so we could alter the speed of the shake. All of the sub's interior practical lights worked, but they didn't light the space enough. Wherever we could find a place in the roof of the submarine, we cut a hole and put a light through — sometimes two or three. They were 150-watt Arri Peppers, and there must have been about 300 of those and about 100 300-watt lamps. Every now and then, we got up to a 600-watt. I used Lee 103 straw [filters] on a lot of them.

"Many of the Peppers were inside the sub as well," Wood continues. "Key grip Michael Travers designed a mount out of loudspeaker magnets with little pins welded to them. We just put the magnet on the side of the submarine, which, of course, was entirely metal. I wanted to show as much of the submarine as possible, which is why I had so many lights. The stop was around a T3.2, and it was all shot on 79 rated at 400 ASA."

Because so many movie lights were in the shots, the grips liberally applied black wrap to help the units disappear into the shadows. Also, all of the European-spec 220-volt AC current lamps had to be rewired for 110-volt DC power for safety reasons, because everyone was working on wet metal. "We couldn't get bulbs for the 110V-converted Peppers," the cinematographer recalls, "so we used some projector bulbs, which worked fine until we started dropping this submarine on the gimbal. These things then began exploding all over the place, and within one day I had lost all my bulbs. We tried to get some more projector bulbs from Japan, but they would have taken a week to arrive. A guy from Universal flew in from America with a couple of suitcases full of Arri 110V Peppers so we could finish the scene."

Wet conditions could be counted on as one of two constants for Wood during the production — the other was authentic Italian cuisine. "The Italian lighting crew cooked dinner every night inside a shipping container that was like our own private restaurant," beams the cinematographer, who is now prepping *Pluto Nash*, starring Eddie Murphy. "It was one of the high spots every night — a shelter from the storm." ■



Moving to the Music

The Artist's Journey, a large-format, motion-platform ride film designed for Paul Allen's Experience Music Project in Seattle, takes viewers on a joyous and very funky journey.

by Jay Holben

Unit photography by Steve Pizzo and Craig Peterson

Nestled near the famous Space Needle in the heart of Washington's Seattle Center is a new structure that promises to deliver a truly unique adventure in music: Paul Allen's Experience Music Project, which broke ground in 1997 and is opening to the public this month. An amalgamation of educational programs, hands-on sessions and museum exhibits, the facility will lead visitors on a technologically advanced journey into the power of rock 'n' roll, jazz, soul, gospel, country, blues, hip-hop, punk and more recent genres.

Allen, who in the late 1970s co-founded a little software company called Microsoft, originally began the Experience Music Project as a venue for displaying his vast collection of Jimi Hendrix memorabilia, which is arguably the largest such collection owned by an individual in the world. An avid accumulator of the musician's personal items, Allen has designed the project in the spirit of Hendrix's "Sky Church" — a place where artists can exchange ideas about, write and make music without the distractions and constraints of the music business. In a 140,000-square-foot facility designed by renowned architect Frank Gehry, who is perhaps best known for designing the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, there are almost 80,000 artifacts that have shaped music history, including instruments (from one of the first electric guitars to those used by artists such as Bob Dylan, Bo Diddley, Muddy Waters and Kurt Cobain), an extensive archive of recordings, films, photographs, fanzines from around the country, stage costumes, handwritten song lyrics and rare song sheets.

Among the attractions is *The Artist's Journey*, a large-format, motion-platform ride film that simulates a fantastic voyage into the origins of music. When the project opens its doors, the first presentation will chronicle the genesis of funk music. Entitled "Funk Blast," the presentation combines special effects, theatrical lighting, film, audio, video, computer graphics and state-of-the-art motion-platform technology. "Funk Blast" follows two brothers who are struggling to form a funk band but can't seem to find the spirit of the sound. They attend the Funk Concert of the Millennium, where they meet up with a magical guide (played by Harry Lenox), who takes them back in time to the origins of the music.

The brothers find themselves on a city street in the early 1970s, where James Brown comes to life out of a billboard image and brings with

him a wild and crazed funk-party world. Suddenly, the boys are surrounded by hundreds of blissfully happy dancers grooving to the sounds of Brown and his original Famous Flames, including Bootsy Collins, Maceo Parker, Fred Wesley and Jabo Starks. Having been schooled by the master, the two fledgling musicians finally find the spirit behind the music and head back to the future with their newfound abilities. They wind up on stage at the Funk Concert of the Millennium, along with George Clinton and Parliament Funkadelic, Dr. John, Herbie Hancock, the Gap Band and many other funk masters — some together again for the first time in decades — where they perform the ebullient tune "Flashlight."

To make this experience a unique musical memory for the audience, *The Artist's Journey* was photographed in both Super 35 and 65mm. For the presentation, the story of the boys and their early challenge to find the music was photographed on Super 35 and is presented to an audience of 40-60 people on a series of mosaic video monitors. As the boys take their trip back in time, the monitors are whisked away to reveal a huge screen that not only wraps the audience nearly 180 degrees horizontally, but also covers a large portion of their vertical peripheral vision. This segment of the presentation also includes integration with a motion platform to further immerse the audience in the experience.

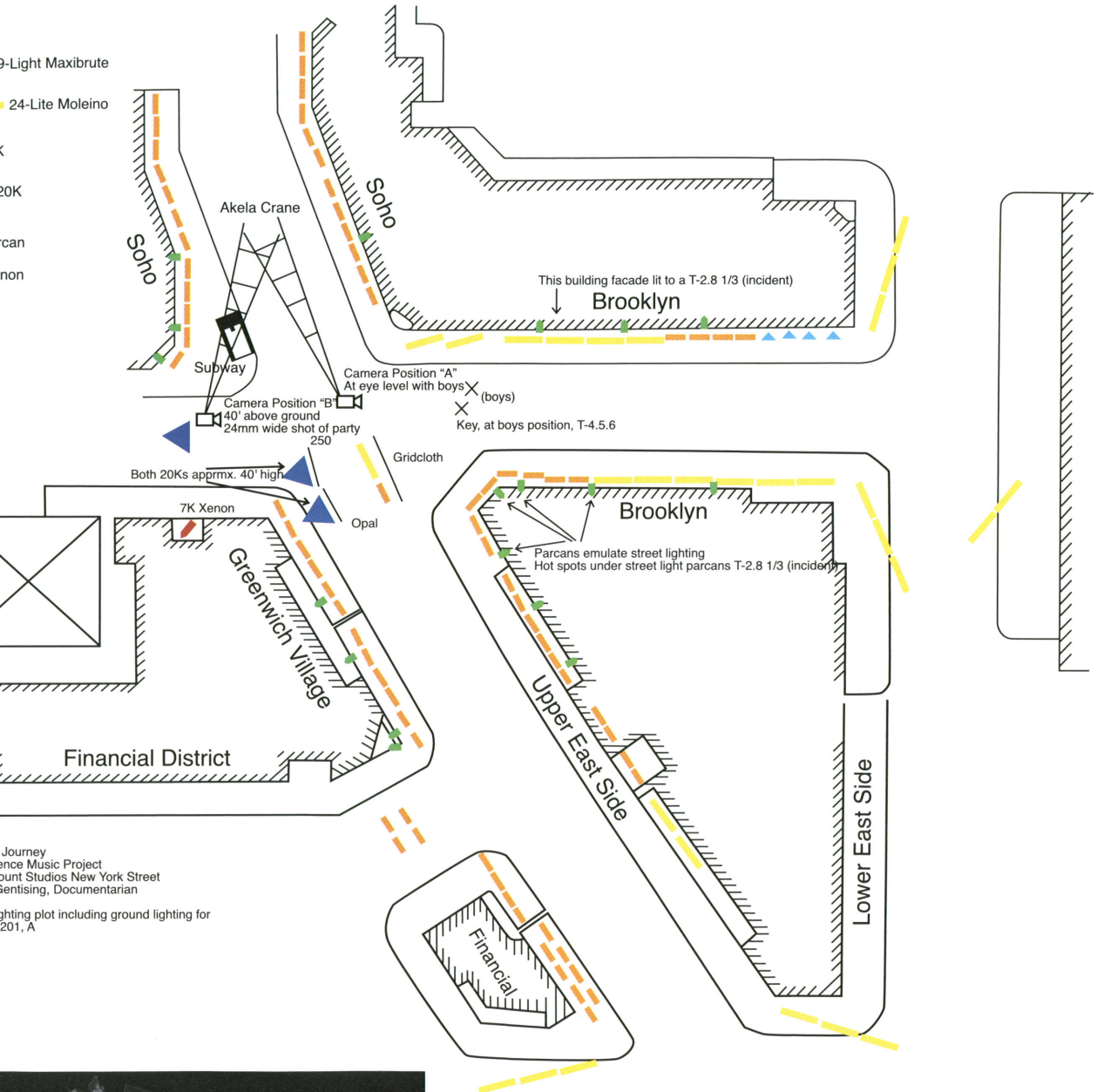
One of the first challenges for the film's production team was to capture a totally new performance by Brown, the "Godfather of Soul." The hard part wasn't getting the aging master to find the groove, but rather creating a version of what the singer looked and moved like in 1970. To do this, the keyboard gurus at Digital Domain utilized a dance double, hand-picked by Brown himself, named Tony Wilson. Wilson worked closely with Brown and choreographer Lisa Ruffin to master Brown's famous moves and re-create them for the cameras. Although audiences are watching Wilson's steps, they're looking at the entirely computer-generated face of Brown at age 37.

To achieve this, 65mm footage of Brown was shot in his newly adopted hometown of Augusta, Georgia, to serve as a reference plate of the artist's natural movements. In addition, a full cast and 3-D laser scan was taken of his face. The artists at Digital Domain, under the supervision of visual-effects producer Todd Isroelit and supervisor Andre Bustonoby, then created a completely CG Brown based on photos and videos from 1969-1971. On the set, pieces of Scotchlite tape were carefully positioned on the major muscles in Wilson's face. Two separate 35mm "outrigger" cameras were positioned with the sole responsibility of covering Wilson from two complementary angles. Each outrigger camera was equipped with a beam-splitter and a strobe light that would fire once each frame. The strobe would "ignite" the Scotchlite pieces and create a reference for the digital artists, allowing them to carefully position Brown's CG face over Wilson's.

Bounding over the seemingly monolithic technological hurdles involved with this project was veteran music-video and large-format cinematographer Vince Toto, whose forays into special-format photography and lighting have included *Rockin' Rollercoaster*, *It's Tough to Be a Bug* and the 3-D *Honey, We Shrunk the Audience* for Disney Studios, as well as second-unit photography on the James Bond attraction *License to Thrill*.

For *The Artist's Journey*, one of Toto's principal challenges was the depth of field necessary for the motion-simulator sequences of the presentation. Due to the physiological connection between visual stimulators and physical motion, if an audience member is looking at any soft-focus areas of the screen while riding the motion platform, there is a high likelihood of nausea. To combat this potential hazard, Toto photographed the majority of the 65mm sequences at a T5.6/8 split. In 65mm, that translates to a consider-

Artist's Journey



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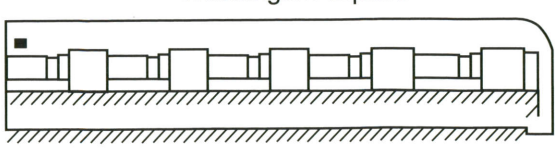

On Paramount Pictures' New York Street, Toto and gaffer Louks ringed the facades with nine-light Maxi Brutes and 24-light Moleenos. Although the majority of instruments were lamped with very narrow spot globes, some narrow- and medium-flood fixtures were peppered throughout to provide more coverage. The Par cans on the roofs were focused across the street to emulate the pools of light from the various streetlamps positioned throughout the exterior set, for an incident reading of T2.8 1/3.

Some of the colors utilized on the skyward fixtures were Steel Blue, Light Red, Lavender, Pale Lavender, Light Green, Canary Yellow, Full Plus Green, and MTY correction. The two 20K fixtures were positioned near the roof of the corner building, and the Moleeno and Maxi-Brute behind the gridcloth provided the key source for the boys.

For the Akela crane shot diagrammed here, Toto employed Kodak's Vision 5279 at a T-stop of 5.6. Although only one 7K Xenon is shown in the diagram, Toto positioned several such fixtures to act as sweeping spotlights during takes, and to help accentuate the deluge of Mylar confetti that rained down on the dancers from air cannons deployed on the roofs. Nearly two tons of Mylar was used during the shooting, and gusty Santa Ana winds carried the little shiny blue pieces as far as a half-mile away from the back lot, spreading the "funk" into neighboring communities.

able amount of light — 4,115,000 watts, to be exact. Utilizing the New York Streets on the Paramount Pictures backlot, Toto and gaffer Brian Louks put together what could be the largest lighting package ever assembled by one crew at that particular location.

"We had an immense collection of 24K Moleenos and nine-lights on the roofs of New York Street," Toto recalls. "In fact, the studio had to bring in an engineer to reinforce the structures to withstand the sheer weight of the gear up in the air. We had, literally, a ton of sandbags alone on the roofs, and between the Moleenos and the nine-lights, I had more than 120 fixtures just giving me the ambient lighting for the location.

"We went with nine-light Maxis and 24-light Moleenos for a number of reasons," Toto continues. "First, we had much more control of

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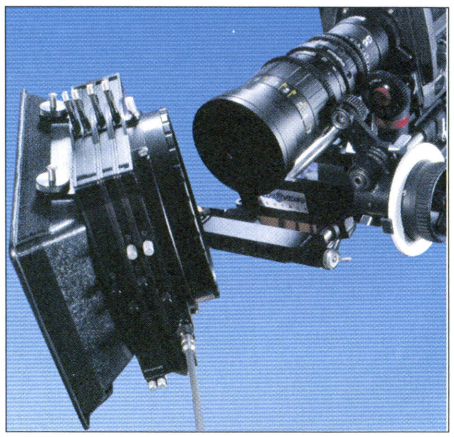

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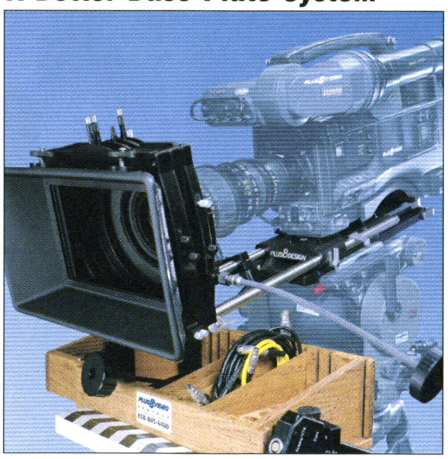

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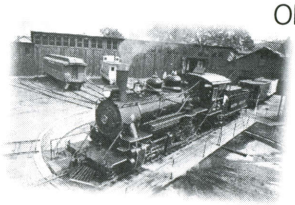

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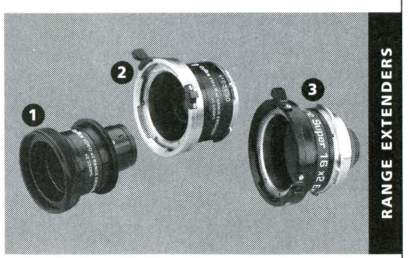

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Moving to the Music

The two protagonists of "Funk Blast" find themselves transported back to the 1970s, where James Brown instigates a dance party in the middle of the street to teach the boys how to "get on up."

the light levels by being able to switch off individual globes on any given fixture. Second, during the big dance number, all of the lights were running off a dimmer board on a chase sequence, and we needed fixtures with a good deal of punch that could go off and on as quickly as we needed them to — you can't do that with a 20K. Third, the sheer number of fixtures required to light three city blocks at a T5.6/8 split just couldn't have been done with 20Ks — we couldn't find that number of fixtures in town! When Brian and I were doing the photometrics in preproduction, we looked at each other and said, 'Wow, this is going to be a lot of light!' The prerig on the backlot was seven days, and we needed every minute of it."

To help control the light sources and to increase the efficiency of the lamps from their position three stories in the air, the majority of the fixtures were lamped with very narrow spot globes. Although Toto exposed the 65mm portions at a T5.6/8 split, the lighting obviously didn't require that amount of punch all over the backlot. "I lit in layers," he recounts. "In one area, I'd be at key [at the T5.6/8 stop], but a little farther away I'd have a drop to a T4. Some of the building facades were at about a T2.8/4 split. Although we'd certainly gone funky with the look and color palette, I wanted to maintain an overall feel that would still resemble a street at night.

"I knew we were going [to be] colorful in the production and costume design, and I wanted to match that with my lighting. I wound up having a discussion with Bradley Thordarson, the production designer, for about a week on what the overall color palette would be. We both wanted colors that were poppy and funky, but at the same time, I knew I needed a lot of light, and I didn't want to be losing a great deal of punch through overly saturated gels. In the end, we went with a bit of a softer palette that we'll punch up a bit with digital color timing."

To help punch up the colors even more, Toto used Eastman Kodak's EXR 5293 200T in both 35mm and 65mm. To match the grain structures in sequences that would incorporate both formats, all of the 65mm footage was rated at 400 ISO and pushed one stop in the lab. Although the majority of 35mm and 65mm footage does not play at the same time, three "frozen moments" shots, executed by Jim Gill's ReelFX

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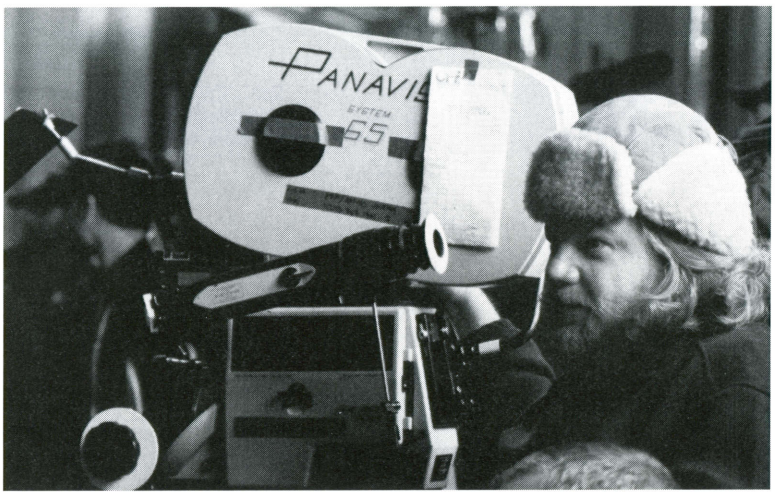
Moving to the Music



Cinematographer Vince Toto, who photographed the film in both Super35 and 65mm.

(see *AC* Dec '99), were used to simulate Brown throwing his energy to various members of his band. These moments, photographed with 150 Canon Rebel 35mm cameras that were modified to ReelFX's requirements, were digitized and integrated into the 65mm footage.

"I like 5293 because it's a good, all-purpose stock, especially for shooting visual effects," Toto says. "In the majority of the Vision line, they have built in a buffer in the red [layer,] which makes compositing the greenscreen sequences a bit difficult. They don't make the SFX 200 in 65mm, so I went with 5293. In addition, it's a more contrasty stock, so the colors really punch. And with the push, which helped me reach the 5.6/8 stop as well, the 35mm and 65mm match up really well. There were a few sequences, like a big Akela-crane establishing shot of the boys [see lighting diagram] that I opted to shoot on 5279 to get us that extra third of a stop for a bit more depth of field, and it cuts in great with the 5293. One problem with the 93 in 65mm is that you can't get it in 500' rolls, which we were using for the Steadicam. Instead, we ended up with a loader spooling down 1000-footers in the darkroom pretty much all day long!"

The camera package for *The Artist's Journey* was an impressive array of 65mm gear, including Panavision's Hand-Holdable System-65 with the flicker-free, semi-silvered, fixed reflex mirror; a Panavision Studio 65; two Arriflex 765s, and a CP65, which traveled with the

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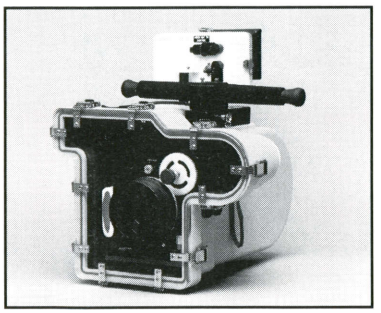
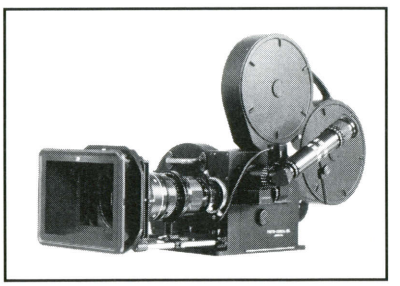

35mm 4ML Splash Housing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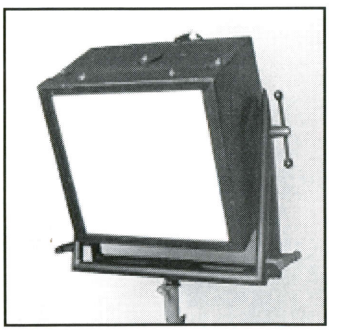
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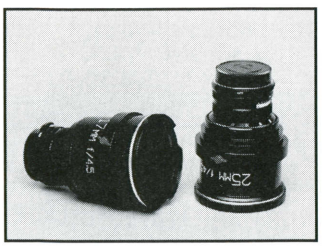
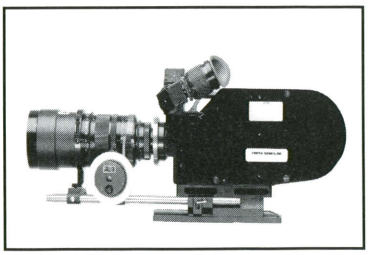


17mm & 25mm Pentax Lenses

16mm 1VN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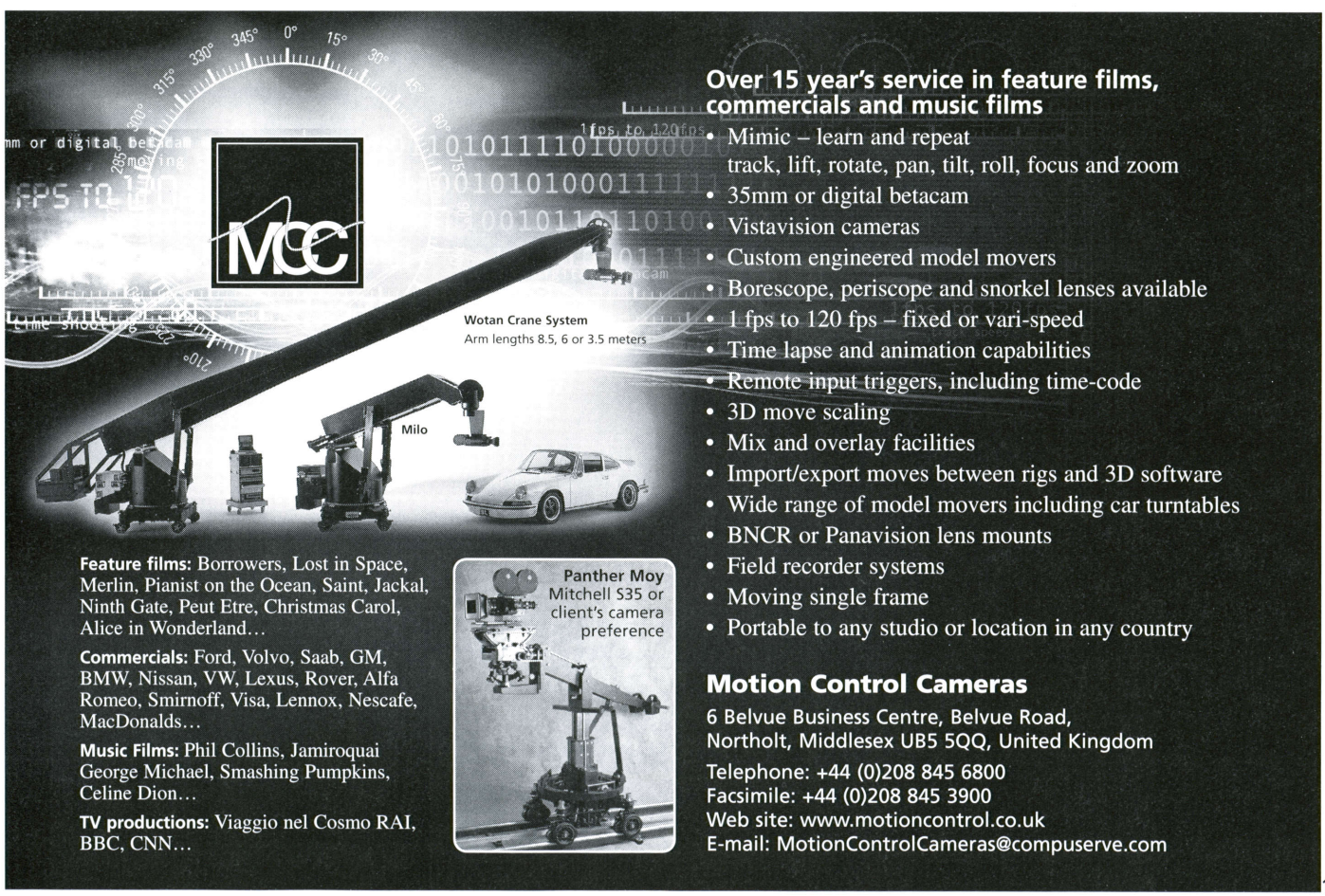
production to shoot Brown and his band against a greenscreen in Georgia. Toto carried the Panavision rectilinear lens series, as well as 19mm and 24mm fish-eye lenses. Also in the package was a 30mm Arriflex lens, which was not rectilinear and had a fish-eye quality to it. Toto explains, "One of the bizarre things with the lenses on this show is that, due to the curvature of the screen and the short distance from the projector to the screen, the fish-eye lenses actually look normal. We did intensive testing with Digital Domain and shot a curvature chart for every lens, so that when they do digital compositing, they can build in whatever distortion they need to match the specific lens that the plate was shot with."

Another concern in dealing with extreme projection size was that any inadvertent camera movement, even the slightest bump, is extremely jarring when the onscreen image takes up most of the audience's peripheral vision. "No matter what size lens you're using, everything is really amplified in 65mm as compared to 35mm. Even though this is a simulator-ride film, any little camera bumps can really ruin a shot, so when we did our big Cablecam shots, I brought in a gyrostabilizer as an extra insurance policy against any unwanted movements. Fortunately, the Cablecam was so steady I didn't need it."

The Funk Concert of the Millennium portion of the presentation was shot at the Great Western Forum in Inglewood, California. Again, both 65mm and Super 35 were shot side by side. Toto turned to theatrical lighting designer Richard Ocean to bring the color palette created on the Paramount backlot to life on stage. The design — which centered around a collection of concentric, circular trusses arranged in an inverted-tier pattern, with each of the circular sections able to telescope out from one another on chain-lifts — incorporated eight Turbolight Cyberlights, 12 VariLite VL4s, 16 VL6s and 16 Syncrolite 7K and 24 3K automated Xenon sources, among other units.

In addition to performing greenscreen compositing, crafting 3-D CGI effects and re-creating the young Brown's face, Digital Domain served as the facility for digital color timing for the "Funk Blast" project. All of the film was scanned into the firm's SGI workstations at 4K resolution, completely color timed digitally, and output via laser to 65mm internegative stock within the facility walls.

For more information on the Experience Music Project, visit its Web site: www.experience.org. ■



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Saluting Ingenuity

The Academy Scientific and Technical Awards hail the industry's behind-the-scenes innovators.

by Jay Holben

On March 4, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences (AMPAS) recognized recipients of its scientific and technical achievement awards during an elegant ceremony staged in the grand ballroom of the Regent Beverly Wilshire hotel in Beverly Hills. The evening was hosted by actress Salma Hayek (*Time Code*, *From Dusk Till Dawn*), who joked, "If I happen to make a mistake pronouncing your names or some of the technical terms, just for a moment imagine that you are me up here and doing this in Spanish!"

The scientific and technical achievement awards are presented by the AMPAS for devices, methods, formulas, discoveries or inventions of special and outstanding value to the arts and sciences of motion pictures. Of the 19 scientific achievements that were considered by the awards committee (headed by administration director Richard Miller and chairman Richard Edlund, ASC), 16 individuals were selected to receive the honor this year.

The foremost mark of distinction granted by the academy is the Gordon E. Sawyer Award, an Oscar granted to an individual whose technological contributions have brought credit to the motion-picture industry. Established in 1981, the Sawyer Award is named in honor of the veteran sound director, who died that year. This year, the honor was presented to Dr. Roderick T. Ryan, ASC.

Ryan, who retired in 1986, served as regional director of engineering services for the Eastman Kodak Company for 40 years. He began his career as a World War II Navy photographer and was one of the cameramen who photographed the atomic bomb tests at Bikini Atoll. Ryan holds a doctorate in communications from the University of Southern California. Throughout his distinguished career, Ryan has been the recipient of many honors, including two special commendations from the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers (SMPTE), for which he has served as a governor, treasurer, vice president of photoscience and vice president of motion-picture affairs. Ryan also is a fellow of the British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society.

In 1981, the academy honored Ryan with a scientific and engineering award for a film processor specially designed for visual effects used by optical houses. In 1990, the academy celebrated Ryan again with a Medal of Commendation for "outstanding service and dedication in upholding the high standards of the academy." The ASC selected Ryan as an honorary member, a special tribute reserved for only a few non-cinematographers (including Neil Armstrong, Walt Disney, George Eastman, Thomas Edison and Gregory Peck). Ryan has written numerous books and textbooks recognized within the industry as authoritative sources.

In addition, the AMPAS Board of Governors voted John A. Bonner Medals of Commendation to Edmund M. Di Giulio, founder and president of Cinema Products Corporation, and to Panavision

design engineer Takuo Miyagishima. Named in honor of the late director of special projects at Warner Hollywood Studios, the Bonner Medal is awarded for "outstanding service and dedication in upholding the high standards of the academy."

AMPAS has now recognized Di Giulio four times for his sterling work. In 1968, he received a scientific and engineering award for the design and application of a conversion that made the reflex-viewing system for motion-picture cameras possible. In 1992, he received another such award for the design of the CP-65 Showscan Camera System for 65mm motion-picture cinematography. In 1998, Di Giulio received a technical achievement award for the design of the KeyKode Sync Reader. Di Giulio is a well-known lecturer and has appeared at technical conferences and symposiums around the world. A fellow of the SMPTE, he holds more than a dozen patents.

Miyagishima began his career with Panavision in 1955, and under his leadership, the company has received two Oscars. The first was in 1978, for the Panavision Panaflex motion-picture camera system, and the second was in 1993, for the Panavision photographic lens for the Auto Panatar anamorphic system. In 1991, Miyagishima received the Fuji Gold Medal, recognizing his outstanding contributions to the advancement of cinematography worldwide, and in 1998, he was honored with two awards from the AMPAS: a scientific and engineering award for the mechanical design of the Primo series of lenses for 35mm cinematography, and a technical achievement award for the design and development of the Eyepiece Leveler. That same year, the ASC gave Miyagishima its Presidents Award for his contributions to the industry.

The Academy also singled out the following individuals and companies for excellence in the field.

Actress Salma Hayek, host of this year's Academy of Motion Pictures Arts & Sciences Scientific and Technical Achievement Awards, poses with Dr. Roderick T. Ryan, ASC, recipient of the Gordon E. Sawyer Award for technological contributions to the motion-picture industry.

SCIENTIFIC AND ENGINEERING AWARDS
(Academy Plaques)

Nick Phillips for the design and development of the three-axis Libra III remote-control camera head. The Libra III head can accept a range of film cameras and their lenses, and allows the operator to add stabilization to each axis for medium focal length lenses. Motion capture and playback are also options.

Fritz Gabriel Bauer for the concept, design and engineering of the Moviecam Superlight 35mm Motion Picture Camera. The quiet Moviecam Superlight is an extremely small, light, 35mm professional motion-picture sound camera that allows the cinematographer to film in ways and situations that were never before possible.

Iain Neil, Rick Gelbard and **Panavision, Inc.** for the optical design, mechanical design and development of the Millennium Camera System viewfinder. This unique and versatile viewfinder, which features two independent viewing positions, provides a very high-resolution video-assist image, greatly enhancing its application for on-set compositing or non-linear editing.

Huw Gwilym, Karl Lynch and **Mark Crabtree** for the design and development of the AMS/Neve-Logic Digital Film Console for motion-picture sound mixing. This console allows the user multi-position mixing capabilities, stem-rout-

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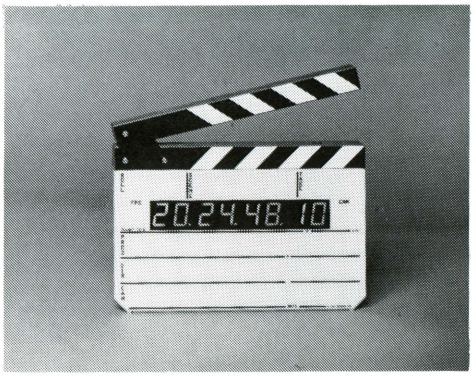

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James Moultrie, Mike Salter and **Mark Craig Gerchman** for the mechanical design and optical design of the Cooke S4 Range of Fixed Focal Length Lenses for 35mm motion-picture photography. These state-of-the-art lenses are the result of intense efforts to meet industry requirements in several areas. Providing superior performance in several cinematographic aspects, these lenses include a unique linear-focus system.

Marlowe A. Pichel for development of the process for manufacturing Electro-Formed Metal Reflectors, which, when combined with the DC Short Arc Xenon Lamp, became the worldwide standard for motion-picture projection systems. Over the decades, the impact of the Electro-Formed Metal Reflector has completely changed the presentation side of the industry, allowing the replacement of the carbon-arc light source and the implementation of automated projection systems.

L. Ron Schmidt for the concept, design and engineering of the Linear Loop Film Projectors. These radical new projectors provide superior print handling, image steadiness, screen illumination and enhanced viewer experience by means of an extremely simple, air-driven mechanical transport system.

Nat Tiffen of Tiffen Manufacturing Corporation for the production of high-quality, durable, laminated color filters for motion-picture photography. Materials of uniform color characteristics are implanted between layers of optical glass and bonded together under extremes of heat and pressure. The outer surfaces are ground and polished to specified close tolerances, free of distortion and resistant to changes in temperature or

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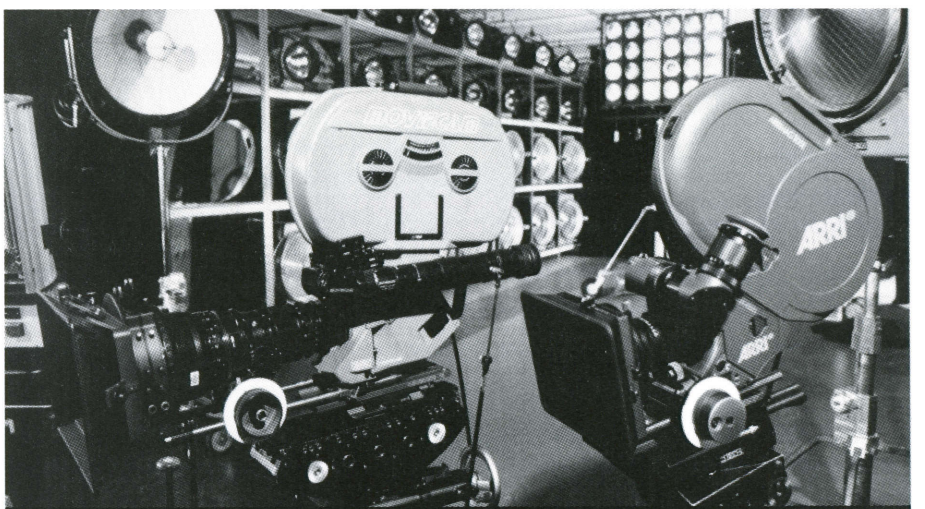

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Vivienne Dyer and **Chris Woolf** for the design and development of the Rycote Microphone Windshield Modular System. Designed to eliminate physical acoustical rumble and to mask a microphone's high sensitivity to wind and other unwanted noises, these lightweight, rugged windshields accomplish these tasks without altering or impairing the original frequency response of the microphone.

Leslie Drever for the design and development of the Light Wave microphone windscreens and isolation mounts from Light Wave Systems. Designed to eliminate physical acoustical rumble and to cover a microphone's high sensitivity to wind and other unwanted noises, this line of shock mounts and windscreens accomplishes these tasks without altering or impairing the original frequency response of the microphone.

Richard C. Sehlin, Dr. Mitchell J. Bogdanowicz and **Mary L. Schmoeger** of the Eastman Kodak Company for the concept, design and development of the Eastman Lamphouse Modification Filters. The ELM Filters enable a laboratory to achieve additive printer contrast and color reproduction using a subtractive lamphouse.

Hoyt H. Yeatman, Jr. of Dream Quest Images and **John C. Brewer** of the Eastman Kodak Company for the identification and diagnosis that led to the elimination of the "red fringe" artifact in traveling-matte composite photography. The elimination of this artifact obviates expensive, additional computerized-image processing. ■

Short Takes

A Striking Thesis and an Antic Ad

A Labor of Love and Forgiveness

by Stephanie Argy

Early this year, the ASC gave its Gregg Toland Heritage Award for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography to Christopher Popp, the director of photography on an American Film Institute thesis film called *Shadows*. The 24-minute movie, set in a World War II concentration camp, tells the story of a teenage prisoner who becomes a "kapo" — a brutal overseer of his fellow inmates — in the misguided hope that his status will allow him to protect himself and his father. In the end, he atones for his moral lapse with a devastating and irreversible action.

In preparing to make the film, director Mitch Levine read scores of scripts before screenwriter Arthur Lorenz, also an AFI fellow, told him the story that would eventually evolve into *Shadows*. "At the last moment, there Art was with this story," recalls Levine. "I knew it was something I had to make." Levine turned immediately to Popp and production designer Hans Pfleiderer, both of whom had assisted him with earlier AFI projects. "They are certainly the very best the AFI has to offer," says Levine.

The three come from very different backgrounds. Before enrolling at AFI, Levine worked in theater as an actor, director and designer on productions that included Broadway shows, *Einstein on the Beach* and *La Strada*. Pfleiderer trained as an artist and architect in his native Germany. Popp, also German, studied photography, then worked on documentaries, movies of the week and features as a first assistant cameraman and operator, and as a cinematographer for second-unit work and additional photography.

The AFI imposes a number of restrictions on students making their thesis films. Last year, when *Shadows* was made, its budget could not exceed $50,000, the shoot could last no more than eight days, and the entire production had to take place in Southern California. Obviously, these were serious hurdles for a story set in a German concentration camp. "Everyone — *everyone* — told me I was insane," says Levine. But he was determined to find a way to make the film.

Three or four months before the shoot, Levine and Popp prepared exhaustively, creating three successive sets of shot lists and storyboards. Pfleiderer then used Softimage to pre-visualize the CGI shots, and spent the summer before the shoot in Europe, visiting concentration camps and taking photographs and measurements for reference purposes. Levine and Popp also looked at paintings together, and Popp photographed movie images off of video monitors, so that he could more clearly discuss looks for different scenes with Levine. They even shot a rough video version of the movie according to the evolving shot lists and storyboards in order to try what they wouldn't have time or money to test during the shoot. "It was just for us to see if things would really work out," says Popp. "We didn't have time to experiment, and we didn't have time for reshoots."

Of course, a key activity was location scouting. "The whole enterprise depended on finding the right location," says Pfleiderer. After searching the greater Los Angeles area, the filmmakers found two places that could be adapted to their needs. The first, used in the film for exteriors and a gas-chamber interior, was at San Pedro's Fort MacArthur, a former military base now jointly owned by the Unified School District and the Department of Parks and Recreation. The second, used for the interior of the prisoner barracks, was at the Disney Ranch in Santa Clarita, a movie location about 30 minutes north of Los Angeles.

When negotiating for locations and equipment in a film-savvy city such as Los Angeles, students often find that vendors, worn out by endless requests for free or cheap gear for school projects, want nothing to do with them. But with persistence — and help from several people who believed in the project — the makers of *Shadows* were able to overcome much of Hollywood's donor fatigue and wrangle an amazing amount of equipment and assistance, including

Top: Benjamin (Martin Ferrero) waits for his son, Joshua, in the barracks during an early-morning scene from *Shadows*. Bottom: The kapo (Joel Polis, center) talks to Joshua (Andrew Reynolds) as Benjamin looks on.

Frame grabs courtesy of Christpher Popp.

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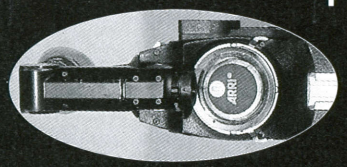

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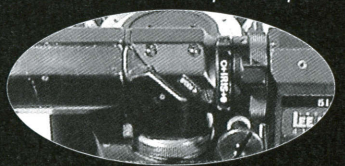

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four cameras and a Louma crane from Panavision, film from Kodak, lighting equipment and distribution from the Leonetti Company, and sound-editing and mixing services from Soundelux. Levine says that in addition to the script, which people found "worthy," the filmmakers' passion won over doubters. "If someone believes in something as deeply as we did, it's hard not to get affected," he says. To help potential contributors better understand the vision behind the movie, Pfleiderer created a series of watercolor paintings representing key images from the movie.

The filmmakers also received visual-effects assistance from Digital Domain, Rhythm and Hues, and Softimage. This proved to be critical, because to enhance the illusion of a concentration camp, the production wound up using three shots featuring computer graphics. These include the opening image of the movie, an establishing shot of the camp that features rows of computer-generated barracks. "It was important to take viewers into that world in the very first instant, " says Levine. This was especially true, he adds, because so much of the rest of the story unfolds in very small, confined spaces.

Though some of the effects work was done by digital-media students at AFI, the professional effects houses helped out with rotoscoping, compositing and rendering. Textures used on buildings in the effects shots came from Pfleiderer's visits to the concentration camps. He stresses, however, that the real set dressing was equally important. He recreated bunk beds he'd seen in the German camps using scrap wood he bought from Resets, a retailer of second-hand wood. He also simulated barbed-wire fences, gas-chamber showerheads and the large "Arbeit Macht Frei" sign over the entrance to the camp. "It doesn't have to be the real thing; it just has to look like it," says Pfleiderer. "That's the great part about filmmaking." Aside from one small section of barbed wire, the rest of the fence was regular wire with short snips of additional wire twisted around it. The showerheads were actually redressed lamp fixtures, and the sign was built of plywood, a welded steel frame and insulation tubing for about $83.

The sign especially impressed Levine when he arrived for the day's shooting and saw it on the grounds of Fort MacArthur. "Truly, that was the darkest moment I'd experienced," says Levine. "Having it here, in a place so utterly American — I was terrified as I approached it."

During the shoot, which took place in March of 1999, the on-set crew ranged from 65 to 80 people each day. Most were professionals, not students, says Levine, who adds that his appreciation for a good camera crew skyrocketed as a result of working with pros.

Levine and Popp had decided that the film should be in color, but they wanted a look in which the color had been drained out, much as the life was being drained out of the inmates in the camp. The students didn't have much money for tests, but Panavision donated the use of its PreView system, a digital camera that lets a cinematographer photograph a still image and then digitally manipulate it to see how different stocks, exposures, filters and other effects will look. This allowed Levine and Popp to be more precise when they finally did their film tests.

Ultimately, Popp shot on Kodak's 7277, a 320 ASA tungsten-balanced stock; he rated the emulsion at the recommended ASA of 320, then bleach-bypassed the print made on Kodak 3383 Vision print stock. Because testing revealed that certain colors (greens and browns) and California sunlight still looked too warm and saturated after the bypass, the cinematographer shot the day exteriors without an 85 filter, using an 80D instead so that the blue layer would be saturated. Afterward, even though the image was color-corrected back to normal, the colors retained the weird quality Popp was seeking. He also kept the fill side nearly 1 ½ to two stops under.

For interiors, Popp took out the 80D. From there, he varied the look and lighting with each scene. In a night scene, for example, he put either ¼ or ½

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Top: A shot of the camp crematorium, from a sequence filmed at San Pedro's Fort MacArthur. Cinematographer Christopher Popp observes, "What will happen to the inmates is expressed through the composition of the frame: they walk into the chimney and come out as smoke." Bottom: Joshua gets instructions from the kapo.

CTB gels on the lights, "just to level the blue a little." He also broke up the light with cookies. Though this was done partly to replicate light coming through slats, a detail many camp survivors remember, the cinematographer says that the unevenness of the light visually implies that some prisoners are more alive than others.

Popp used a ⅛ Black ProMist when the lens was over 20mm and a ¼ Black ProMist when it was under 20mm. "In 16mm, everything above a ¼ Black ProMist was too much because of its tendency to look too soft," he says. Most of the time, he used 25mm or 35mm lenses, and for close-up work he used a 50mm or 75mm. With 16mm film, Popp adds, many people shoot in the 10-30mm range, but because 16mm has a greater depth of field than 35mm, he likes to shoot with longer lenses.

In an effort to save time, Popp did an enormous amount of pre-lighting. Hundreds of feet of cable were laid in advance, and the lights for four different scenes at the same location — the barracks, for example — were set out at once (these units ranged from 12K HMIs to 250-watt Photofloods). Popp also used SunPATH sun-tracking software, a compass and a clinometer in order to calculate where the sun would be at a certain time. The SunPATH system, he adds, allowed him to figure out the sun's path moments before the shoot, giving him one less worry.

Even though Popp used some technically advanced tools on the shoot, he emphasizes that for him, the emotional impact of the cinematography is the most important aspect of a project. "Images have to tell a story," he maintains. "We're not just capturing what's in front of the camera." In one scene, for example, a kapo kills one of the prisoners, then pulls the young protagonist of the story off to one side. As he does, the lighting around them goes darker — a visual metaphor for the teenager's journey toward evil. In the gas chamber, Popp lit the actors from directly overhead with pools of intensely bright, hard light, so that as they pass under the lights, their eyes become difficult to read and their faces look like skulls, as though they are already dead. "The emotions are expressed through the visual language of cinematography," says Popp.

Working on *Shadows* forced crew members to think deeply about its subject matter. "The film is about love and forgiveness, and making choices in a world in which there are no choices," says Popp. "It [asks,] 'What would you do?'" Levine recalls that as the crew shot the final scene of the movie, he saw tears streaming down the boom operator's face. "Everyone was so deeply affected by the moment," remembers Levine. "That told me we had done something worthy, and that the experience of shooting *Shadows* would always be the greatest artistic experience of my life. People gave their hearts and souls to the making of this movie."

Teaching a Dog New Tricks
by Stephanie Argy

Even the simplest of today's commercials involve many participants, each with different areas of expertise. The problem is finding a way for everyone to understand the premise of a job, as well as what everyone else is contributing to it. Crash Films, a music-video and commercial production company, tries to make communication clearer by taking advantage of the latest tools. "We've been using new technology to create traditional commercials, doing animatics on Adobe Premiere and location scouting on digital video [DV]," says director Robin Willis. "Sometimes we almost pre-do the spot."

A recent Crash commercial for Hebrew National, for instance, used all sorts of modern, behind-the-scenes tools, even though the spot appears to be very basic. It starts behind a hot-dog cart, from the vendor's point of view, as the camera reveals a small dog jumping up and down. The camera then lifts up and over the stand in time to see the dog do a series of tricks. Ultimately, a woman appears, buys a hot dog and leaves with the dog.

The spot seems simple enough, but it was complicated by three factors: it is in one, continuous take, with only a cutaway for the product; the performance by the dog was unpredictable, and there was a crane move over the top of the hot-dog cart. "[These aren't things] you want to figure out on the day of the shoot — they have to be designed early on in the process," says Willis. To work through the spot, he first did an animatic — storyboards captured on video and timed to the cut. "I do my own little doodles, have my storyboard artist, Andrew Baron, come in, then dump the drawings into Premiere," says Willis. "Then I know where the events have to happen. If we have to change things, we do."

After the animatic, Willis did a mock-up of the spot on DV. "In this case, we replaced the drawn images with DV images." Sometimes, he adds, Crash Films will put up a Web site with the treatment, locations, casting choices and other information from a project so that everyone involved in it — from agency people to location scouts to the art department — can visit and find what they need.

On the Hebrew National spot, the animal trainers accessed a version of the animatic and the DV sketch via the Web site, saw when the dog was supposed to do the tricks, and realized the animal

Storyboard and Photo courtesy of Crash Films.

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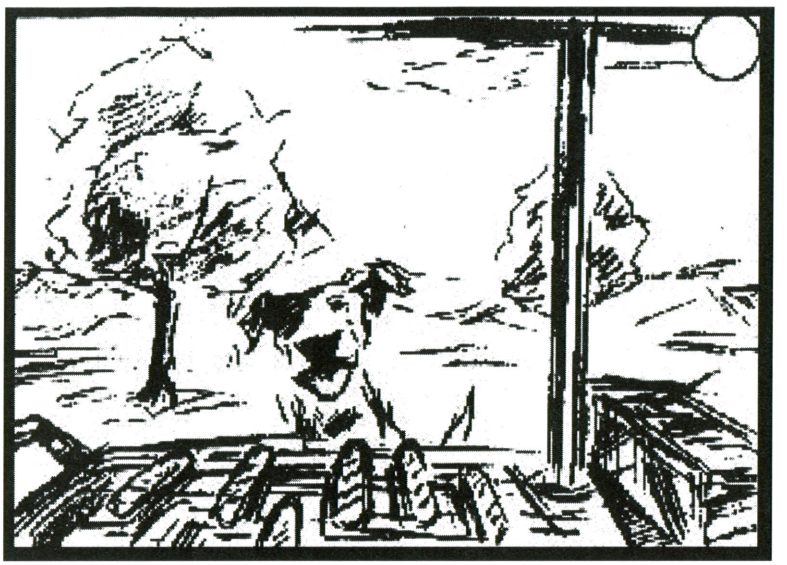

A storyboard by Andrew Baron was one of the first steps on Crash Films' recent Hebrew National commercial, which features a dog doing tricks near a hot-dog stand.

couldn't do all of its tricks in such quick succession. "The dog had to do these tricks at very specific intervals, driven by voice-over," says Willis. "We could tell it wasn't going to work out because we were all communicating [before the shoot]." By learning of the problem early, Willis was able to solve it before arriving on set: he planned to shoot one of the tricks — the jumping — on bluescreen, then composite it into the vendor's POV shot in the moments before the camera lifts over the cart to reveal the actual dog. Early tests also revealed the difficulty of the camera move over the cart. "To get from Position One to Position Two required a Technocrane," notes the director.

Willis, who calls himself a "reluctant, closet gearhead," began his career at a small production company in Portland, Oregon. After a stint doing theater in Los Angeles with John Cassavetes, he began working as a freelance gaffer. Finally, he became a cinematographer and director, and sometimes he still shoots his own spots. "The advantage is that I can light things really fast — but that's also the disadvantage," he says. "If I'm working as the cameraman *and* the director, the director always beats up the cameraman! That's why it's good for me to work with other directors of photography sometimes — they'll take the time to get the extra brushstroke."

When Willis doesn't shoot his own spots, he often works with cinematographer Trish Govoni, as he did on the Hebrew National commercial. Govoni says that despite Willis's back-

Cinematography Screencraft

by Peter Ettedgui

The 17 directors of photography profiled in this book encompass three generations of filmmaking, representing a wide range of visual styles — from *The African Queen* to *Delicatessen*. Lavishly illustrated with over 500 color pictures, 300 black-and-white photos, and numerous diagrams, this reference features informative accompanying text based on interviews with each cinematographer. This is a perfect book for practicing professionals, students, and movie buffs alike.

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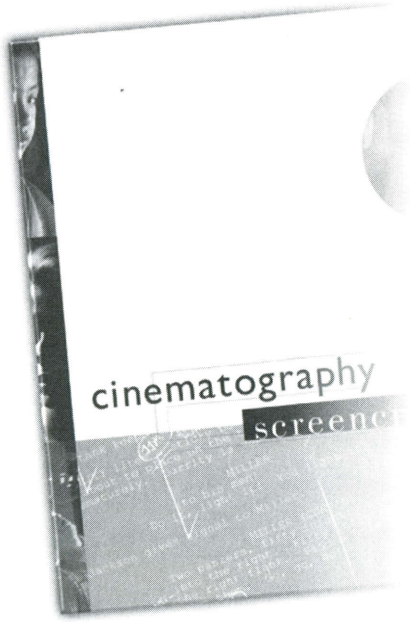

ground in lighting, he doesn't try to micromanage. "Once he decides he's not shooting the spot, he doesn't need me to ask him for everything," she says. "He trusts me to do it the way that I want to do it. He likes to work with minimal amounts of equipment, which is always a good challenge."

Willis likes using equipment as small and mobile as possible so that he can work quickly. "I love shooting things on 16mm, and I like working with prime lenses," he notes. "Overall, it's a much smaller presence." For 35mm projects, he prefers using the Moviecam SL, which he finds less delicate than the Aaton 35 yet small enough to suit his style.

Part of that style is to keep the camera in motion as much as he can. "Every time I shoot something that's really locked down, it looks sort of dead. But if something is handheld and has a little bit of movement, it makes things feel sort of organic." In the case of the Hebrew National spot, the camera was a Panavision Platinum, mainly because the crane was also provided by Panavision.

The final version of the storyboarded scene. Before they arrived for the shoot, animal trainers were able to access Crash Films' animatics on the Web in order to plan the dog's actions.

On the front of the camera, Govoni used only a bit of filtration. "Outside, I like to go with 85B instead of straight 85s, just for the warmth," she says. "Also, I like the Tiffen Ultra Cons for commercials. Colorists I've talked to say that if the Ultra Cons are on, they have a little more room in the blacks." Because it was a day exterior shoot, the lighting on the Hebrew National spot was very simple. "It's a very natural-looking spot," says Govoni. "I think there was one light used on it, a Sun Ray [Sun Burst] 10K. That was really just used as a fill."

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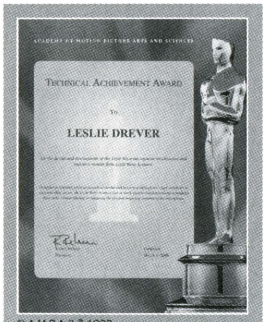

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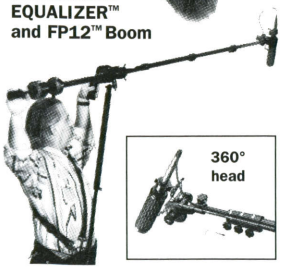

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she says, was to find the optimum time of day for the shoot, which turned out to be about 3 p.m., and to make sure everyone was ready by then. "We did a lot of rehearsing in the morning to make sure everything was going to work," she says.

Willis says that these days, he rarely pushes for a lot of in-camera trickery. "I shoot most things really straight, and if I'm going to manipulate the image, I'll do it in the transfer," he says. "I used to do a lot of work with labs and printing and different stocks, but in the commercial venue, a lot of agency folks get really frightened doing anything really aggressive and irreversible to the original, especially in comedy." The problem, he explains, is that anything done in-camera is permanent, which worries the agency people.

According to Willis, his recent work has been a blend of technology and non-technology. "The work is either incredibly technical, or incredibly random and actor-driven," he says. "I'm happiest if I've got a camera on my shoulder and we're making it up as we go along." He admits, however, that planning shoots with animatics and tiny DV cameras gives him a bit of flexibility and experimentation. "The little cameras are like drawing, and the big ones are like drawing with the pencil attached to a 40' 2 x 4, with a lot of people hanging on, helping you draw."

He is now trying to expand his career into other media, including the Internet. Crash Films posts a new DV short on its Web site (www.crashfilms.com) every week. "The mandate with Film-a-Week is that we only allow ourselves an hour to shoot and an hour to edit," says Willis. "The films are just a couple of minutes long; the idea is to make them as small as possible so the download time isn't exorbitant.

"Superficially, [the business] all seems very digital and electronic, but it's actually becoming more organic because of the expediency of communication over long distances," he observes. "The process becomes more like it was when I was working in Portland, where we'd all get together at a bar and hash things out." ■

New Products & Services

compiled by Douglas Bankston

On the ATAC

UFO (Unidentified Filming Operations) of Granada Hills, California, has created the All-Terrain Aerial Crane (ATAC), a vehicle that appears able to traverse even a battlefield. The four-wheel-drive ATAC can travel across rugged ground and even water hazards that are up to 4 feet deep. For versatile maneuverability, the vehicle features four-wheel steering with a 360-degree turn radius of just 18'.

The ATAC crane arm can boom to a maximum horizontal extension of 85' and a maximum vertical extension of 96'

and is rotatable with the arm raised or lowered 360 degrees. At the end of the arm is a lighting basket with preset light mounts configured to handle nine 12K HMI Pars, six 18K HMI Fresnels, six 20K Fresnels, four 24K 24-Par Moleenos or nine 10K Fresnels. Additional configurations are available. The automatically leveling lighting basket can pan 180 degrees and tilt 90 degrees. Lift capacity for the basket is 1,500 pounds at full horizontal extension and 2,500 pounds at full vertical extension, depending on environmental conditions and the angle of extension.

The ATAC comes complete with driving and operating personnel and a 1400-amp motion-picture generator to power the lighting packages. Four stabilizing hydraulic outriggers secure the vehicle in place.

The All-Terrain Aerial Crane partially extended (upper left), retracted (lower left) and on the set of *Gone in 60 Seconds* (far right).

Gaffer Jeff Murrell had the opportunity to work with the ATAC on *Gone in 60 Seconds* (see page 34). "If I needed to arm way down for a lower rake or something," he says, "the ATAC could go 180 degrees down because of the way it's balanced. That's a 20 ½-ton crane base, so given the way it's weighted with the outriggers, we could take that arm entirely 180 degrees down, and I could focus [light] laterally. That came in quite handy for a lot of situations where I had to get up and over something. The other good thing about the crane is that it can go into about 4 feet of mud. It's a four-wheel-drive, so I could stick it in uneven ground."

At one point while shooting *Gone in 60 Seconds,* he adds, "We were up in Malibu on a long, steep drive, and we put the ATAC on a part of the lawn that no one could get to except [by using] an all-terrain vehicle that could climb a near vertical incline. I think the incline was about 30 to 35 degrees, quite a steep angle. The ATAC is a great crane, and we used it quite a bit because of its versatility. I could put whatever [lights] I wanted on it."

UFO, (818) 895-7117, pager (818) 552-0070, fax (818) 920-7588.

A Classic Look from Schneider Optics

The Hollywood films of yesteryear often had stylistically soft textures — sometimes deliberately created by the cinematographer, but often due to the less-advanced optics and film stocks available at the time. That lack of clarity, sometimes with the aid of fabrics or diaphragm disc placed in front of the lens, led to what is known as the

aesthetically pleasing "classic soft look."

Modern cinematographers frequently try to emulate Old Hollywood's classic soft look while continuously battling technological advances that have made lenses and film stocks razor-sharp. Schneider Optics has simplified the softening task with its line of Classic Soft filters, which can help cinematographers achieve imagery that harks back to the industry's Golden Age.

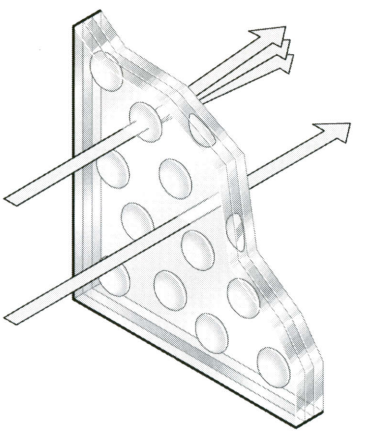
Designed to be used in front of long lenses in video, high-definition video and film applications, Classic Soft filters blend small wrinkles and blemishes and maintain focus without betraying the fact that an actor is being photographed with diffusion. In the normal range of exposure, highlights are given a subtle glow when using the filters. A stylish glow is added to overexposed highlights such as a blown-out window, yet the scene contrast remains under control. Blacks won't be muddied.

To accomplish this blending, Schneider used its experience in developing lens optics to create a Micro-Lenslet array, hundreds of tiny, bubble-like lenses that make the filter look as though it's been spattered with cooking oil. Light passing between the tiny Micro-Lenslets is unaffected, but light that passes through a Micro-Lenslet is slightly refracted (see illustration at right). This provides a precisely controlled, soft image that is overlaid onto a sharp, in-focus image. The result is known as Schneider In-Focus Diffusion, a combination of sharp and diffused light that allows a diffused image to maintain an overall sharp focus. In other words, the image is sharp but lacks fine details. The degree of diffusion is determined by the size and spacing of the Micro-Lenslets per square inch.

The Classic Soft filter, as a whole, is made up of two diamond-cut pieces of optical glass that sandwich a third layer, made of laminate, that contains the Micro-Lenslet array. Air gaps between the three layers are eliminated when the entire assembly is fused into a single optical element. The fused filter is then tested with a laser interferometer to ensure exact flatness and a correct parallel relationship between both sides.

Cinematographer Brian J. Reynolds (*NYPD Blue*, *Runaway Virus*) used Classic Soft filters to create a feeling of 1960s nostalgia for the recent telefilm *The Beach Boys: An American Family.* In fact, he used the Classic Soft filters for every camera setup. "To get the soft effect," Reynolds says, "most diffusion degrades the image. But the Classic Soft filters give you a satin-like image. They take highlights and create a soft aura without changing the contrast."

Reynolds used both zoom and prime lenses and shot on Kodak Vision 250D 5246, 320T 5277 and 500T 5279 stocks. The cinematographer adds that the Classic Soft filters work equally well in combination with other filters. He supplemented the Classic Soft filters



with Tiffen Tobacco filters to provide a honey-colored glow for certain scenes.

To avoid stacking filters, Schneider offers Warm Classic Soft filters to achieve a warming effect with In-Focus Diffusion. This combination filter provides every feature of the Classic Soft and the Schneider 81-One in a single filter.

Director of photography Robert McLachlan, CSC, has used the Classic Soft filters extensively. While shooting "Matroyshka," an ASC Award-nominated episode of the TV series *Millennium,* he created flashbacks by using Arriflex Varicons on two cameras and diffusing the images with the filters. "For the flashbacks, I used a Rosco chocolate gel for both Varicons," he describes. "That way, we injected some nice, warm tones into the shadows. I then used the Classic Soft filters, which are really fabulous. They're like classic old Mitchell filters, but they're very consistent. They gave those sequences a bit of an aura and glow. They came onto the market while I was working on *Millennium,* and I immediately embraced them; we were using Zeiss lenses and we wanted a very hard, sharp, cold look, but the filters took a bit of the edge off and gave us a some blending."

McLachlan also employed the filters on a recent feature, *Final Destination,* to blend the skin tones of the mostly teenage cast. This blending ability is one reason he is using the filters on his current project, the TBS telefilm remake of *High Noon,* which takes place predominantly outdoors in daylight. "I'm using the #2 Classic Soft on both A and B cameras to soften the picture ever so slightly," he says. "The nice thing about these filters is that while they subtly break down the sharpness, they don't really give you a diffused effect. In fact, you have to look carefully at a projected print to see the difference with the filters in and out [of the matte box]. It seems to work really well with the type of lighting we're doing on *High Noon.* I wanted to take the whole picture back a bit, to make it less contemporary. We're going for a very contrasty look, not unlike the original film. We are also pulling some of the color out, and when you desaturate and crush the blacks, it's very hard on the actors' faces, because the subtle crows' feet and imperfections start to become more pronounced. I wanted to blend the pores a bit more on extreme close-ups."

McLachlan had to be particularly careful with hots that contained bright light sources and specular highlights, because the Micro-Lenslets have a tendency to drag the highlight flares on panning moves. In this own tests of the filters, Francis Kenny, ASC (*Wayne's World 2*, *She's All That*), also noticed that effect, but found that the extent of this effect depended upon the focal length of the lens being used. Overall, however, Kenny reports he was pleased with the performance of the Classic Soft filters,

and he plans to put them through their paces on an upcoming film starring Whoopi Goldberg. "The filters are absolutely spectacular," he avows. "Schneider is really an incredible company."

Classic Soft filters are available in densities of ⅛, ¼, ½, 1 and 2 in sizes of 4" x 4", 4" x 5.650" and 6" x 6.6". Schneider's optional MaxTran Multi-Coating is available on the filters in order to maximize light transmission while reducing flare and improving color and contrast.

Schneider Optics, Inc., (800) 645-7239 or (516) 761-5000, fax (516) 761-5090, e-mail: info@schneideroptics.com, Web site: www.schneideroptics.com.

Australian Camera Mount

Now available from Cinekinetic, based in the land Down Under, are the Marsupial Cinesaddles — lightweight, beanbag-like camera mounts that can double as digital-video (DV) camera carrying cases. The Cinesaddle, Minisaddle and Babysaddle all feature pouches that can store small, DV-sized cameras when the saddles are not being used as camera mounts.

To create a static mount, one can simply place a camera on top of a Cinesaddle that is resting on a firm surface. The unit's deluxe mounting kit can be used to strap the Cinesaddle and camera to any moving object; the beads within the Cinesaddle absorb vibrations from the moving object or vehicle.

Encased in high-strength, water-resistant canvas, the Cinesaddle weighs just 2 pounds.

Cinekinetic Pty. Ltd., 011-61-8-9459 3690, fax 011-61-8-9493 2186, e-mail: info@cinekinetic.com, Web site: www.cinesaddle.com.

Tiffen in Telecine

Tiffen, the well-known camera filter manufacturing company, has teamed up with colorist hardware and software manufacturer First Art to begin researching the production of the Tiffen Crystal Image filters for telecine artists. The partnership brings together Tiffen's

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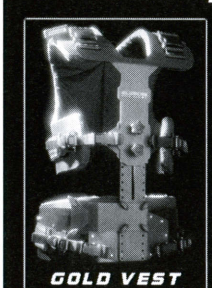

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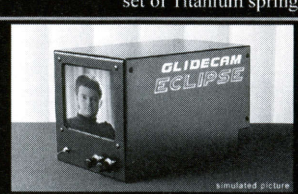

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filter expertise and First Art's real-time image-processing engine, known as Primal, which is capable of modeling natural filters for telecine colorists.

Marty Ollstein, the developer of Tiffen's Crystal Image system, explains, "By porting to Primal, Crystal Image could bring Tiffen's industry-standard camera filters to the telecine suite, allowing artists to extend their creativity into post with familiar production tools and terminology."

For development updates, check the Tiffen Company and First Arts' Web sites at www.tiffen.com or www.firstart.co.uk.

Longest Field Lens

Canon Broadcast has released an 86x field zoom lens, the Digi Super 86xs, for standard- and high-definition video work. The new lens is the first to incorporate Canon's new optical-stabilization technology. The Digi Super 86xs achieves a maximum focal length of 1600mm with a 2x extender.

The optical-stabilization system is capable of eliminating vibrations at a frequency of up to 10 Hz for precise imaging at the telephoto end of the lens. The "xs" technology reduces weight but adds a built-in front element protection filter, in addition to its Constant Angle Focusing System, Digital Servo System and crossover for switching between 16:9 and 4:3 cameras.

Canon U.S.A., Inc., (800) 321-4388, Web site: www.canon.com.

35mm Primes for HD

Angenieux and Carl Zeiss have joined to create the CLA 35 HD Prime Lens Adapter, which is designed to allow high-quality, 35mm professional film prime lenses to be mounted on ⅔" high-definition (HD) cameras. The adapter

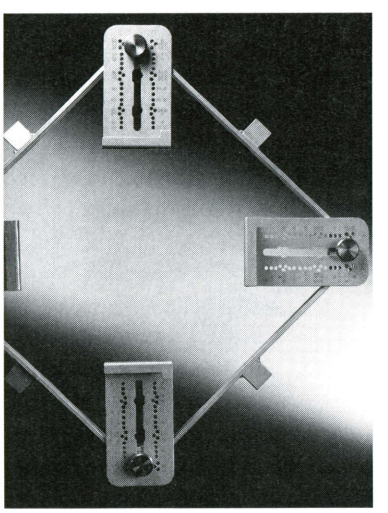
allows prime lenses such as Zeiss's Ultra Primes to be used with HD cameras.

"The introduction of this ⅔" HD prime lens adapter is a significant development in the transition from traditional film to HD video production," says Christopher Beauparlant, U.S. sales manager at Angenieux. "It provides film producers with the optical look and feel they are accustomed to, and provides video producers with the ability to achieve a true film look by using film lenses."

Angenieux, (973) 812-3858, fax (973) 812-9050, e-mail: angenieux@tctus.com, Web site: www.angenieux.com.

Speed Ring Family Grows

Chimera has introduced another Adjustable Speed Ring designed for use with Chimera's Quartz and Daylite Lightbanks of 1200 to 6000 watts. Adjustable from 12" to 21 ½", the new ring allows the use of the same ring for a wide variety of lighting fixtures.



Chimera, (888) 444-1812 or (303) 444-8000, fax (303) 444-8303, e-mail: sales@chimeralighting.com.

Signal Possibilities

JVC has released the RM-P275 Triaxial system, which is capable of accommodating both 16:9 widescreen image signals and traditional 4:3. The RM-P275 is designed specifically for use with JVC's existing line of field ENG cameras.

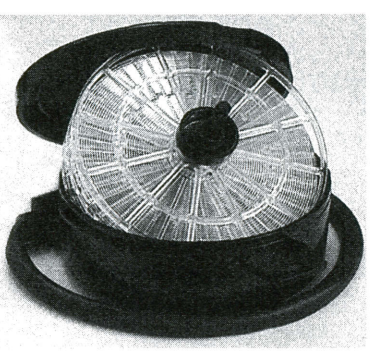
The system is able to support 16:9 wide-image signals by incorporating a new wide-band 12 MHz transmission circuit for luminance signals. Utilizing a component-transmission system makes the RM-P275 a perfect match with JVC's 50 Mbps D-9 Digital Component VTRs for field recording.

The RM-P275 unit features a Genlock circuit, video level control, intercom and tally. Component, Y/C and composite signals can be output from the system. Maximum distance between a camera and the RM-P275 is 800 meters when using standard 8.6mm Triaxial cable.

JVC Professional Products Company, (800) 582-5825, Web site: www.jvc.com/pro.

Home Processing

Film development can be accomplished at home in about an hour with the Quarz Triple Gauge movie-processing tank from the London-based The Widescreen Centre. The small, round, Russian-made tank will accept, at once, one or two 50' rolls of standard or Super 8 film, one 50' roll of standard or Super 8



and one 50' roll of 16mm film, two 50' rolls of 16mm film, or one 50' roll of 35mm film. Rolls of film must be loaded in complete darkness, such as in a changing bag. After loading, all other processing can take place in normal daylight. No special laboratory facilities are required.

The Widescreen Centre, 0171-935-2580, fax 0171-486-1272, e-mail: call@widescreen-centre.co.uk, Web site: www.widescreen-centre.co.uk.

Relabeling Again and Again

LeMark Self-Adhesives Ltd. has introduced the Plastic Adhesive Laminate label. The reusable labels, designed for permanent road-case applications, stick to virtually any surface without special glues and are extremely difficult to remove, surviving rough treatment and weather elements. A permanent felt-tip marker can be used to write on the label, yet anything written can be erased using a conventional solvent.

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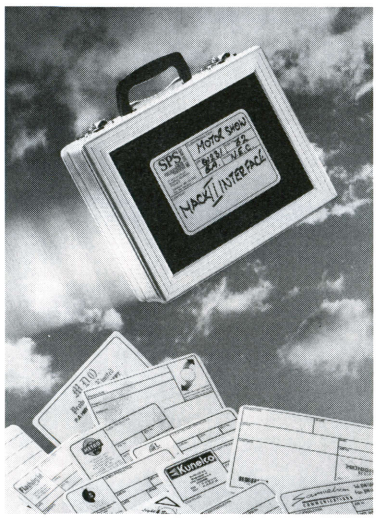

computer tracking systems) or corporate logos and colors before the protective surface is applied.

LeMark Self-Adhesives LTD., 011-44-1480-494540, fax 011-44-1480-494206, e-mail: info@lemark.co.uk, Web site: www.lemark.co.uk.

Digital Scanning and Grading

Computer Film Company in London has created the CFC Digital Lab to provide filmmakers with an optimum-quality, film-to-digital-to-film service. The lab has the capability to scan and grade an entire film from the lowest to the highest levels of resolution currently achievable.

"We're very excited," says Digital Lab head Jan Hogevold. "We can offer clients a completely new way of dealing with their film material. The equipment

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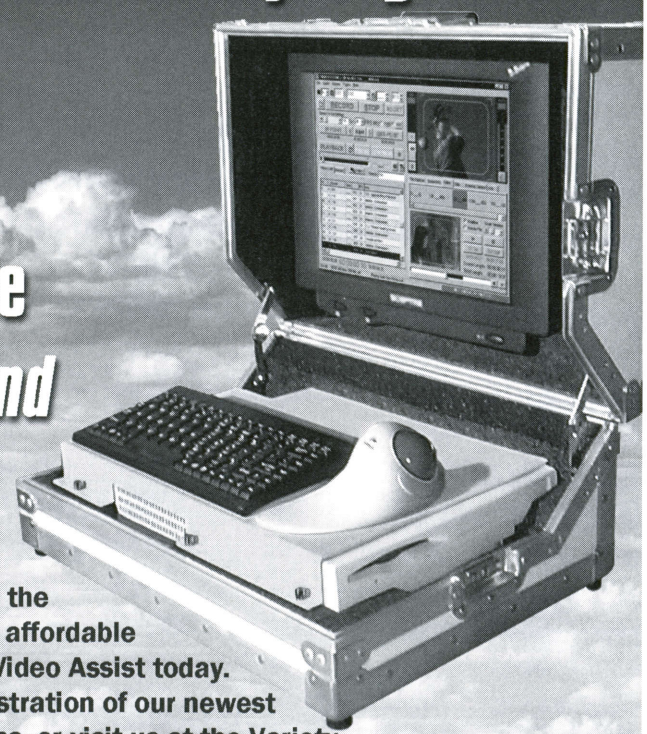

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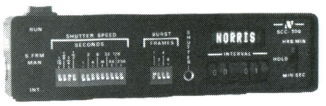

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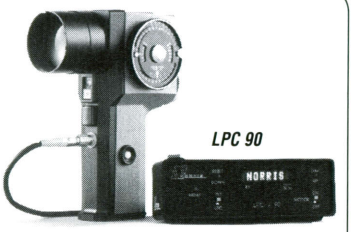

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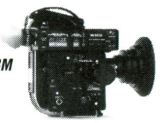

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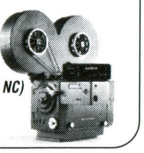
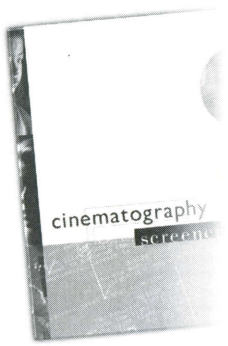


Mitchell 35 (35R3, GC & NC)



Cinematography Screencraft

by Peter Ettedgui

The 17 directors of photography profiled in this book encompass three generations of filmmaking, representing a wide range of visual styles — from *The African Queen* to *Delicatessen*. Lavishly illustrated with over 500 color pictures, 300 black-and-white photos, and numerous diagrams, this reference features informative accompanying text based on interviews with each cinematographer. This is a perfect book for practicing professionals, students, and movie buffs alike.

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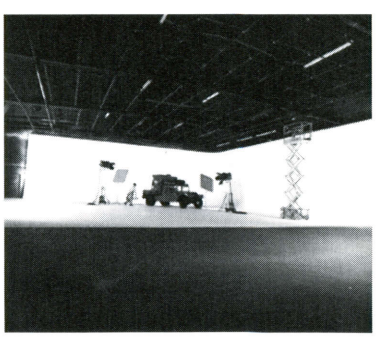
Setting the Stage

Quixote Studios, the West Hollywood brainchild of Mikel Elliott and Jordan Kitaen, is continuing its growth with the opening of the Quixote Studio Store in Hollywood. The store offers film expendables and equipment for rental and purchase. Supplies can also be purchased through the Internet.

The studio itself is also jumping into the Web mix after transforming one of its soundstages into an Internet-ready Web broadcast studio. Known as the "I-



studio," the interactive Stage 4 provides instant uplink of audio and video signals for broadcasting over the Web.

Quixote Studios has three other stages available for commercial, print, film and video shoots, in addition to hosting various industry soirees. The 75' x 110' x 21' Stage 1 features a two-wall hard cyclorama and a full, 1,200-amp lighting grid. Stage 2 has the same features but is smaller, at 42' x 90' x 19'. The 30' x 60' x 14' Stage 3 has a three-wall cyc with overhead cove.

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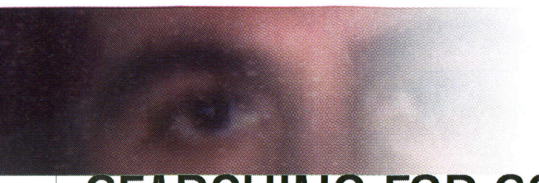

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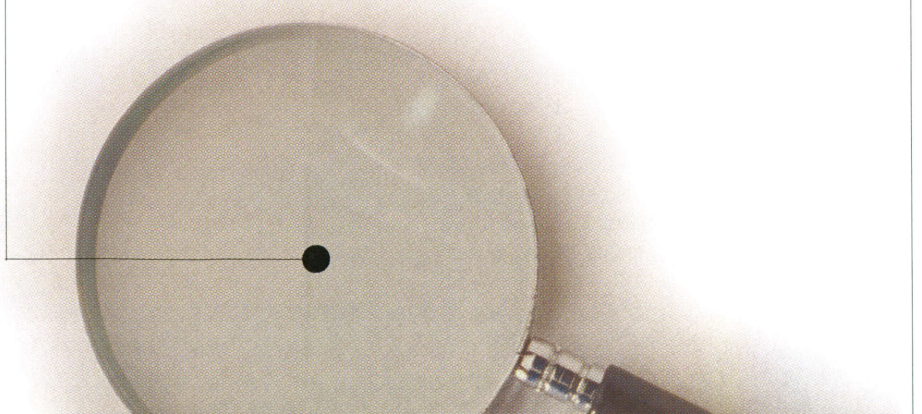


production services and offices, including production trailers, grip and lighting equipment, location scouting, catering, casting and payroll services and more.

Quixote Studio Store in Hollywood, 1000 N. Cahuenga Blvd., (323) 960-9191; Quixote Studios in West Hollywood, 1011 N. Fuller Ave., (323) 851-5030, Web site: www.quixotestudios.com.

Film Gear Expo

Cine Gear Expo 2000 will be held at the Los Angeles Center Studios, 1201 W. Fifth St., on Saturday, June 24, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. A complimentary barbecue lunch and a hosted beer and wine bar will be offered to attendees and exhibitors.

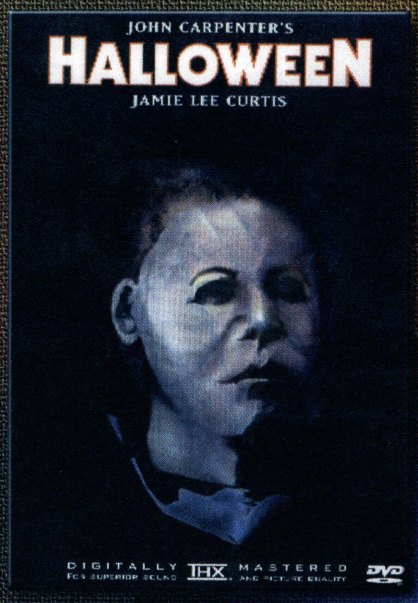
This year's exhibitors include Preston Cinema, Plus 8 Video, Hydroflex, Otto Nemenz International, XenoTech-Strong International, Aerocrane, Spacecam Systems, Fuji Photo Film and Schulz Camera Support.

Invitations are available to film and video professionals by calling the Cine Gear Expo Hotline at (213) 538-0488. Film and video vendors interested in exhibiting should call (323) 256-9056.

Student Film Festival

Entries will be accepted through July 1 for the Fifth Annual Angelus Awards Student Film Festival, sponsored by Family Theater Productions. The college-level student film competition recognizes exceptional films that explore the complexity of the human condition with compassion, respect and creativity. Winning entries will be screened and awards presented at the Directors Guild of America's headquarters in Hollywood on November 11. The awards include the Excellence in Filmmaking Award, which includes a cash prize of $2,500 and industry gift certificates, as well as four other awards of $1,500 and industry gifts and gift certificates.

All genres are eligible, and the festival features documentary and animation categories. Eligible films must be no longer than 90 minutes and must have been completed after June 1998



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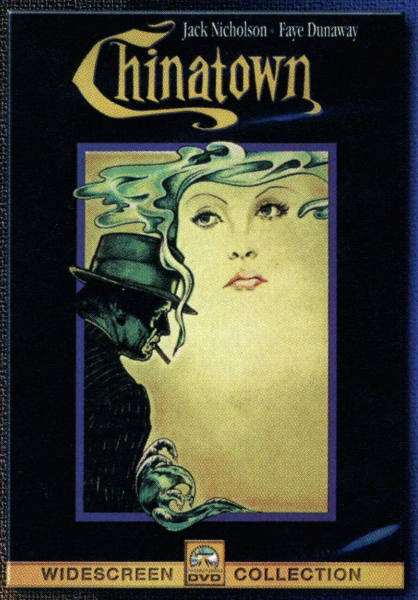

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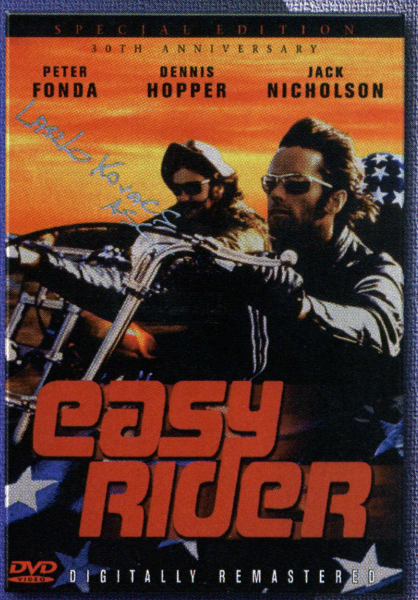

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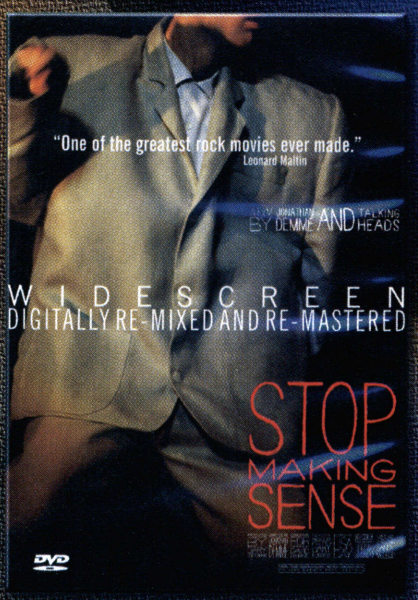

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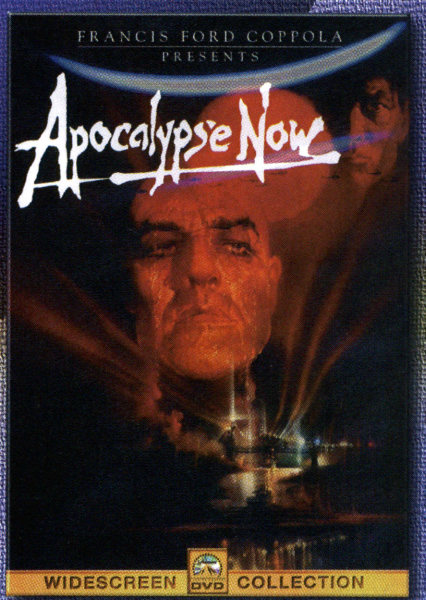

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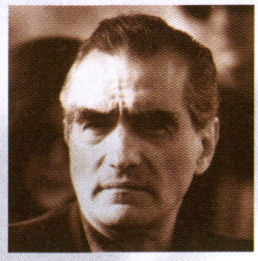

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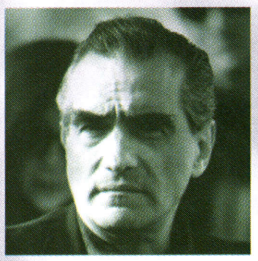
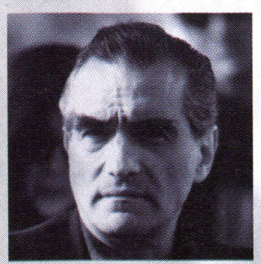


"American Cinematographer is a beacon that has illuminated the field of cinematography and the motion picture industry for years, and I've been reading it since I was a film student. AC is the definitive publication for cinematographers, and is therefore very important within the industry. It's where you go for the unbiased, honest, objective information about filmmaking — where you go for the real story."

— Martin Scorsese



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while the filmmaker was an undergraduate or graduate student. This year, the Angelus Film Festival will accept international entries with the provision that they must be in English, subtitled or dubbed into the English language.

For information and entry forms, contact the Angelus Film Festival at (800) 874-0999 or visit the Web site at www.angelus.org.

An Early Call

The 11th Annual Cinequest San Jose Film Festival is accepting entries of feature-length and short films of artistic, social or stylistic merit for its celebration in San Jose, California, February 22-March 4, 2001. Submissions may be on 35mm, 16mm, video or digital video. All styles and genres may be entered. Festival sections include the Maverick Competition of features, documentaries, shorts and digital films and a special student short-film competition.

Submission deadline for short films of 49 minutes or less is October 13; the feature film deadline is October 27.

Cinequest, (408) 995-5033, fax (408) 995-5713, e-mail: cineqst@wenet.net, Web site: www.cinequest.org. ■

Submissions for "New Products & Services" may be sent to the attention of Editorial Assistant Douglas Bankston at 1782 N. Orange Dr., Hollywood, California, 90028. Please include any images and full contact information with submission. Images may be sent as color slides, color or black-and-white prints, or digital files (Mac Photoshop TIFF format, 300dpi, on Zip or Jaz drives). Information may also be e-mailed to doug@theasc.com with one image attached per e-mail (minimum 300dpi). Materials will not be returned without a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Points East

New Jersey Owner Revives Cooke Optics

by Eric Rudolph

What do the recent high-profile films *Erin Brockovich*, *The Cider House Rules*, *The Ninth Gate*, *The Beach* and *Angela's Ashes* have in common? All were shot with the Cooke S4 series of prime lenses, which have won the hearts and minds of leading cinematographers worldwide since they were introduced two years ago.

However, the S4 series came perilously close to never seeing the light of day. By the early 1990s, Cooke, the venerable British company that made some of the very first (and many of the most popular) motion-picture lenses, had been allowed to wither and almost die by its corporate parent, Rank Organization PLC.

According to Les Zellan, the New Jersey-based chairman of Cooke Optics, Ltd., Cooke lenses were born in Leicester, England, in 1893, when Taylor, Taylor and Hobson purchased what Zellan calls the "revolutionary" Cooke Triplet lens design, patent and company name from T. Cooke & Sons, a telescope manufacturer. Taylor, Taylor and Hobson had its first big success with the motion-picture lenses in the late 1920s, when the Cooke Speed Panchro Series I debuted at about the same time as the talkies.

In 1946, Taylor, Taylor and Hobson was purchased by Rank Organization PLC, under which Cooke prospered during the 1960s and 1970s as a maker of film and video zoom lenses. However, the lens-manufacturing company soon became a sideshow to Rank's resorts and casinos businesses, and it was in real trouble as the 1990s began. Steve Walsh, a 37-year veteran of the Cooke glass-cutting operation, recently told *The Wall Street Journal* that "the place was so run-down that seagull feathers would float down through holes in the roof. We came very close to shutting down."

When Zellan, a former theatrical-lighting director/teacher turned film-equipment importer/distributor, heard about this perilous state of affairs, he put together a syndicate of investors to buy Cooke. However, he ended up about $1.25 million short. Seeking the rest of the financing from British banks, Zellan landed in the London office of The Bank of Scotland. Charles Wighton, the bank's associate director of corporate banking, agreed to meet with Zellan, but says he didn't expect much. However, after Zellan put two big motion-picture lenses on Wighton's desk, the 30-minute meeting stretched out for more than two hours. "We were surprised that an American, or anyone overseas, had so much knowledge of Cooke," Wighton told *The Wall Street Journal*. He added that Zellan "had a clear knowledge of the market and a clear vision of the company."

> **"The place was so run-down that seagull feathers would float down through holes in the roof. We came very close to shutting down."**
>
> —Steve Walsh

Zellan got the loan, and he assumed ownership of Cooke Optics, Ltd., in July of 1998. His first project was to erect a new 21,000-square-foot manufacturing plant outside of Leicester; he runs the company by commuting there from Mountain Lakes, New Jersey, where he owns an optics firm. His second project was completing the new series of Cooke prime lenses, which had been under development since 1993. The creation of the S4s took longer than planned, but the resulting lenses have been garnering rave reviews from some of the world's most accomplished cinematographers, and are in high demand. "The back-order situation is a problem, but it is a good problem," Zellan says happily. "The S4 lenses are producing images that people like."

He cites *Angela's Ashes* (photographed by Michael Seresin, BSC; see *AC* Jan. '00) and *The Beach* (photographed by Darius Khondji, ASC, AFC; see *AC* Feb. '00) as films that show off the S4s to great advantage. Zellan attests that "the S4s especially shine in *Angela's Ashes*, because the interiors were shot nearly wide open with our wide-angle lenses, which perform especially well at full aperture. There are a lot of verticals in that film, and the wide-angle S4s exhibit very low to zero distortion."

Leading cinematographers who have purchased complete S4 sets (14mm, 18mm, 25mm, 32mm, 40mm, 50mm, 75mm and 100mm, all T2) include Oliver Stapleton, BSC (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Cider House Rules*), and Ed Lachman, ASC (*Selena*, *The Limey*, *Erin Brockovich*). Stapleton says

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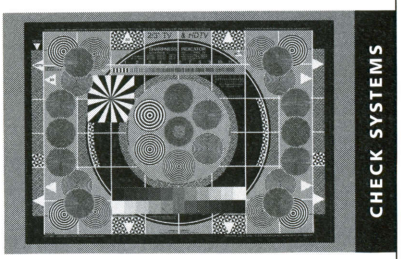

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he is very pleased with his early decision to purchase a set of the new Cookes. "I ordered the S4s two years before the first one came out," he says. "I just had a hunch that I would love them, and I was right. The S4s have sharpness without excessive contrast, and their color characteristics are neutral, well-matched and smooth. The focusing is superb, and after using them almost constantly for nearly two years, we've had no mechanical problems at all. I use the S4s for all my non-anamorphic films and for Super 35, as they were designed to cover the full aperture."

Stapleton confirms that the S4s work well wide open. "The lenses really do perform as well at T2 as at T5.6, so the 18mm night wide shot really is a cracker!" He adds that using the S4s for all of his non-anamorphic films helps him do more accurate testing, and also allows him to concentrate even more on the creative aspects of his work. "There are so many variables in cinematography that having a base to start from makes testing more precise," he observes. "I like to always use the same camera and lenses, and I use the stocks, filters and lighting to control the image. By eliminating the use of different lenses, I'm free to put my energy into the other aspects of my job."

"A rental house can service an entire set of S4s in a day. Downtime is greatly reduced, so the rental houses and cinematographers are happy."

—Les Zellan

Stapleton's positive experience with the S4s has led him to expect improvements in Cooke's highly regarded zoom lenses. "The challenge now is for Cooke is to come up with a faster 5:1 zoom, and a 10:1 that is as good as the Primo 11:1 or the Angenieux HR," he concludes.

Others who are singing the praises of the S4s include camera assistants, according to Zellan. He explains that the older lenses were difficult for assistants because they were small and the markings were tiny, adding that the S4s are larger and have big, clear markings.

The S4s do not employ traditional, multiple-thread focusing, but rather use a cam system (like that found in Cooke zoom lenses) that moves the optical unit back and forth in the lens casing. (The optical unit is sealed inside the housing and does not rotate or pump.) "The cam system allows for nearly linear focusing; it evens out the disparity of the long distances between focusing points at the close-focus positions and the much smaller distances at the middle-to-infinity end," Zellan notes. "The self-contained optical unit also helps to keep dirt and moisture out of the glass." He attributes much of the series' success to Cooke's chief optical designer, Mark Gerchman, and the expert team of craftsmen who assemble the lenses.

The S4s are also designed to spend more time on the set and less time on the maintenance bench. "It takes only an hour to strip down, lubricate and reassemble a Cooke S4," Zellan says. "That can take a day with other leading prime lenses. A rental house can service an entire set of S4s in a day. Downtime is greatly reduced, so the rental houses and cinematographers are happy.

"Developing this unique, simple construction approach cost us an extra year in development," he concludes. "We could have skipped that part and still made a great set of lenses, but they would not have been as elegant." ■

Books in Review

by Ray Zone

Conversations With Wilder
by Cameron Crowe
Alfred A. Knopf
378 pps. $35 Hardbound
ISBN 0-375-40660-3

In *Conversations With Wilder,* Cameron Crowe has reinvented the print interview. Reading as much like a screenplay as a question-and-answer profile, this book could only have been written by a film director, who must be sensitive to the nuances of character that can be found in small aural and visual details. Crowe is the Academy Award-nominated writer and director of *Jerry Maguire,* and his affection for his subject is always apparent.

"My only ambition was to entertain," states Wilder, "this way or that way. To entertain and not to repeat myself, and to make as few mistakes as possible." Wilder certainly succeeded in this ambition. With films such as *The Apartment, Some Like It Hot, Sunset Boulevard, Double Indemnity, Ace in the Hole* and many others, he created some of the most enduring films of the 20th century.

Crowe invites the reader to take every step along the way in this compilation of interviews, sharing with the reader such details as his own tardiness for interview sessions and Wilder's small predilections. By making his book of conversations an open document, the author has created a larger and more definitive canvas on which to paint his complex subject, and he has given Wilder more space in which to breathe and move.

Featuring more than 650 black-and-white photographs, this book definitely belongs on the coffee table. It is visually attractive and nicely designed so that photos from particular films or of individuals under discussion are adjacent to the remarks. Many of the photos showing Wilder at work and play have never been previously published. This wide-ranging series of conversations took place for well over a year, and many subjects are covered: Wilder's parents, his early days as a journalist, his writing partnerships with Charles Brackett and I.A.L. Diamond, and his collaborations with actors such as Jack Lemmon, Kirk Douglas, Jean Arthur, William Holden, Gloria Swanson and, especially, Marilyn Monroe.

Crowe periodically asks Wilder about lighting and camerawork. Was Wilder, for example, influenced by German Expressionist films when making *Double Indemnity*? "No," says Wilder. "There was some dramatic lighting, yes, but it was newsreel lighting. . . I always had a good friendship with my cameraman. Fritz Lang told me early in my career, 'Look for the good shooters; there are some special ones.' He was right, and I was very lucky."

For many years, Wilder collaborated with cinematographer Joseph LaShelle, ASC. In Wilder's view, LaShelle "was an experienced man. And at that time, you know, I was doing mostly pictures in black-and-white. I like black-and-white very much. And black-and-white is much more difficult to shoot than color pictures, because you have the discrepancy of the depths of the color."

Another cinematographer with whom he worked, Charles Lang, ASC, "was very good. Lang sort of walked around, always with the same look on his face: squinting, filled with thought, as if he were looking at the world, not just the movie, and thinking, 'What kind of exposure is this? What exposure is the world?' He was in the upper class of

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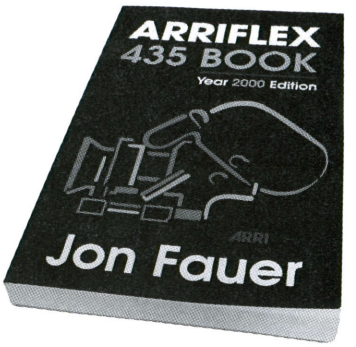

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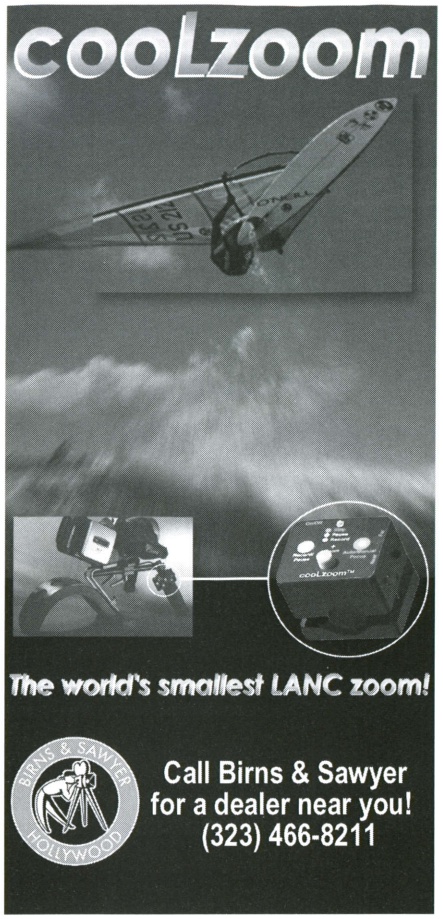

photographers, along with LaShelle."

Conversations With Wilder is a real accomplishment for both Crowe and his subject, and a great gift to both film historians and Billy Wilder fans.

Ready When You Are, Mr. Coppola, Mr. Spielberg, Mr. Crowe
by Jerry Ziesmer
with an introduction
by Cameron Crowe
The Scarecrow Press, Inc.
438 pps., $49.50
ISBN 0-8108-3657-2

Not many assistant directors write autobiographies, but Jerry Ziesmer, who has been a top AD in Hollywood for 30 years, has a real gift for writing that shines through in his recollections from the front lines of movie production. Ziesmer's war stories about filmmaking are hilarious, heartbreaking and hair-raising all at once, as he recounts his experiences working with directors such as Otto Preminger, Martin Ritt, Sydney Pollack, Mark Rydell, John Frankenheimer, Brian De Palma, John Huston and, of course, Francis Ford Coppola, Steven Spielberg and Cameron Crowe.

Ziesmer says he rose to the top of his profession because he never forgot that the "main job of an assistant director is to build an environment on the set that allows the actors and director to create and the cameraman and crews to work efficiently."

The wildly different methods and styles of the directors he's assisted are vividly illustrated in this vastly entertaining book. For De Palma, Ziesmer had to be "a referee," and for Huston, "a very attentive son." With Coppola on *Apocalypse Now*, "we were travelers on a journey within ourselves, an odyssey."

Zeismer's book contains a wealth of wonderful stories about cinematographers. He began his career on *Hello, Dolly!* (1969), and Chico Day, long one of the most respected ADs in Hollywood, instructed Ziesmer on his first day of work to "go down to the stage, get yourself six feet from the camera, and stay there all day! That's the only place you'll learn anything!" During filming of *Tell Me That You Love Me, Junie Moon* (1970) director of photography Boris Kaufman, ASC, gave Ziesmer some surprising and job-saving advice about how to handle the furious Preminger ("Jerry, charge him! Run right to him and scream at him!") after a disastrous scheduling foul-up lost a half day of filming.

Working with John Alonzo, ASC, on Frankenheimer's *Black Sunday* (1977), Ziesmer and second AD Larry Franco worked out a way to film acting scenes during the actual Super Bowl, even working out an ingenious method to get the 86,000 people in the stadium to stand up on cue for the entrance of a presidential double. (They timed the scene to coincide with the national anthem, when everyone *has* to stand.) Those shooting plans established the reputations of Ziesmer and Franco in Hollywood.

The longest section of Ziesmer's book — three chapters — deals with the making of *Apocalypse Now*. Vittorio Storaro, ASC, AIC, the film's director of photography, told Ziesmer, "After I have read the script, I search for an artist for that film. . . the one who 'speaks' that film." For Storaro, it was the paintings of Paul Gaugin that conveyed the "darkness, the danger, the fear" of the "brooding jungle." Later, during production, Storaro and his camera crew waited in the jungle for an entire day for a moment of magic light. Then, suddenly, with "his crew running madly around setting cameras, lights, dolly track all at once," Storaro proceeded to film 12 different camera setups in 40 minutes.

At the outset of his career, Ziesmer vowed to work only on "the very best movies, even if that meant I had to starve once in a while between films." He managed to stay pretty busy, and now, he has given us this rich history of contemporary filmmaking. ■

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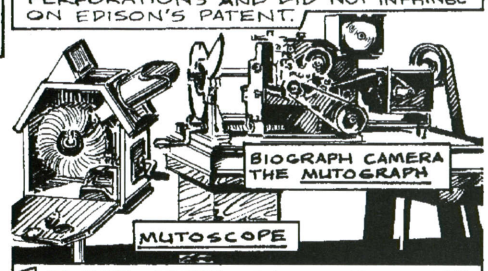
THE BIOGRAPH

by Ray Zone & Chuck Roblin

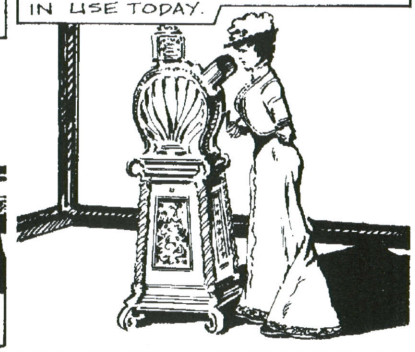
AFTER LEAVING THOMAS EDISON, WILLIAM K.L. DICKSON MET WITH THREE OTHER BUSINESSMEN ON SEPTEMBER 22, 1895 AND FORMED WHAT WAS TO BECOME THE AMERICAN MUTOSCOPE AND BIOGRAPH COMPANY.

DESIGNED BY DICKSON AND CASLER, THE "MUTOGRAPH", WAS THE FIRST BIOGRAPH CAMERA. IT USE NO FILM PERFORATIONS AND DID NOT INFRINGE ON EDISON'S PATENT.

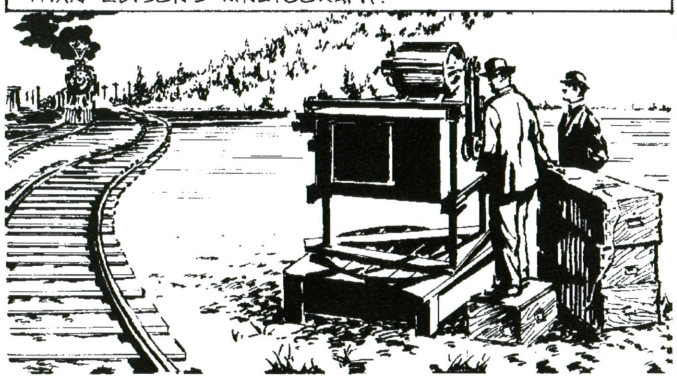


THE MUTOSCOPE WAS A HAND-CRANKED "PEEP-BOX" FOR MOVIES USING FLIPPING CARDS.

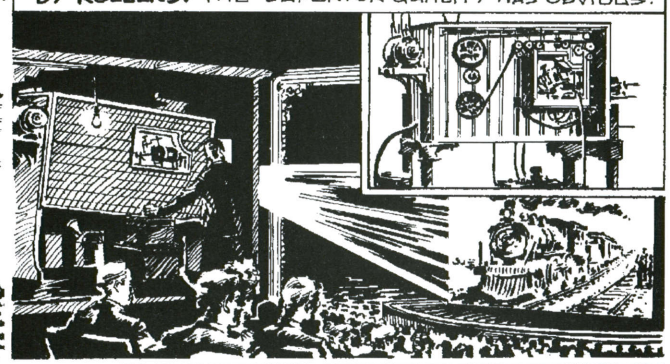
THE MUTOSCOPE ALSO CAME IN AN ARCADE-STYLE MODEL STILL IN USE TODAY.



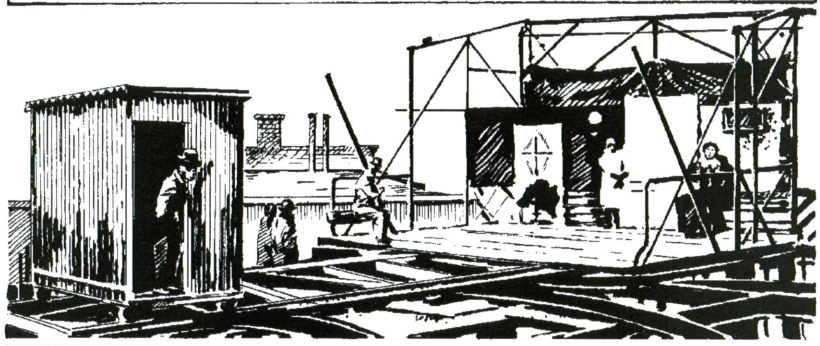
THE BIOGRAPH CAMERA WAS MUCH MORE PORTABLE THAN EDISON'S KINETOGRAPH.



THE BIOGRAPH CAMERA AND PROJECTOR USED LARGE FORMAT FILM 68 MILLIMETERS WIDE TRANSPORTED BY ROLLERS. THE SUPERIOR QUALITY WAS OBVIOUS.

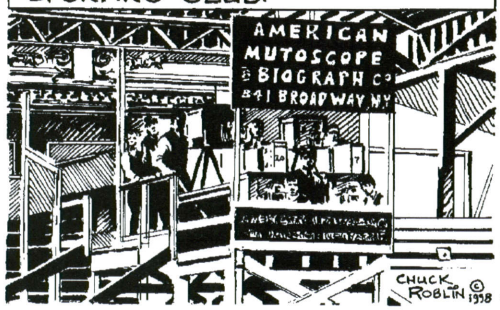


IN 1896, DICKSON DESIGNED A ROOFTOP STUDIO FOR PRODUCTION OF BIOGRAPH FILMS IN NEW YORK AT 841 BROADWAY. IT COULD BE ROTATED TO FACE THE SUN.



DICKSON SPENT FOUR MONTHS IN ROME IN 1898 FILMING POPE LEO XIII WITH THE BIOGRAPH CAMERA.

TO FILM THE JEFFRIES-SHARKEY FIGHT IN 1899 THE BIOGRAPH PRODUCTION TEAM BUILT A SPECIAL PLATFORM AT THE CONEY ISLAND SPORTING CLUB.



FROM 1903 TO 1913 THE BIOGRAPH COMPANY WAS LOCATED AT 14TH STREET IN NEW YORK CITY. HERE THE GREAT DIRECTOR D.W. GRIFFITH BEGAN HIS WORK.

WILLIAM K.L. DICKSON WAS A SEMINAL FORCE IN AMERICAN FILM.

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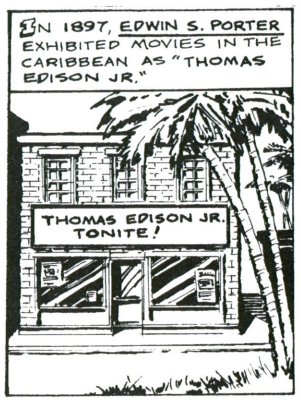
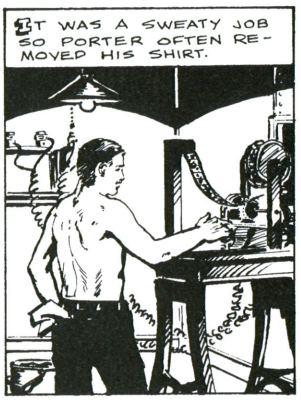
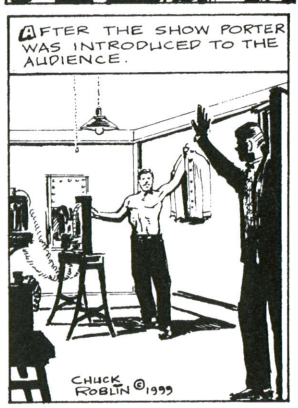
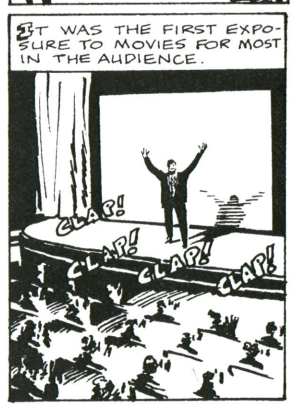
Next Month









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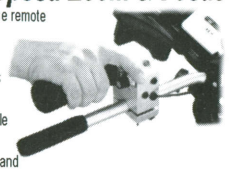

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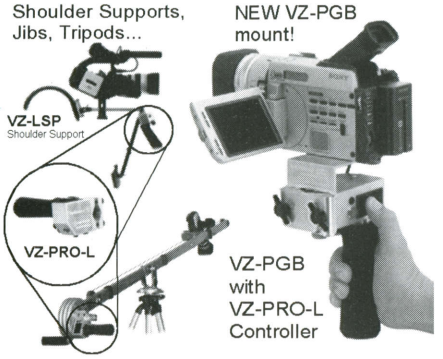

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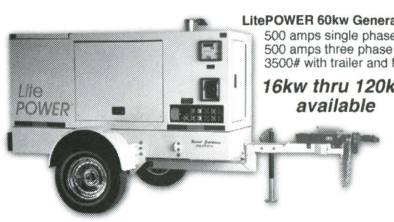

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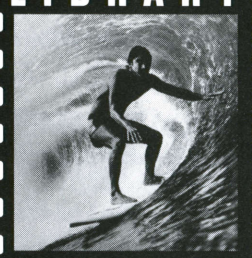

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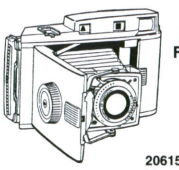

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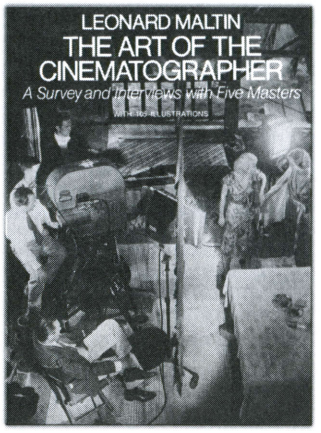

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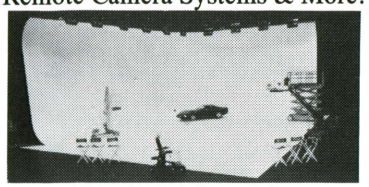

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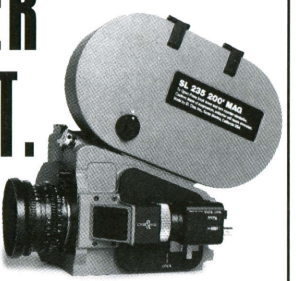

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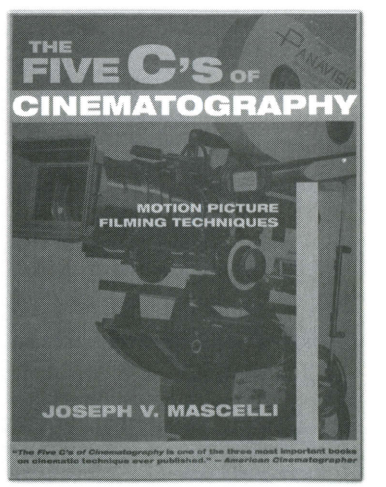

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From the Clubhouse

Roizman and Greenberg Receive Awards

After working behind the scenes in relative obscurity for decades, cinematographers are finally stepping into the limelight, and Society members **Owen Roizman** and **Adam Greenberg** were recently given awards for their career achievements.

Roizman received a Lifetime Achievement Award at the Palm Springs International Film Festival in California this past January. It was the first time a cinematographer has been honored with a lifetime achievement award in the 14-year history of the festival.

Roizman was born in New York, where his father, Sol, was a news cameraman for Fox Movietone News. The younger Roizman studied physics and math and planned to become an engineer, but decided cinematography would be more interesting. Roizman apprenticed with Akos Farkas, a TV commercial cameraman. He later became a first assistant with Gerald Hirchfeld, ASC, who upped him to camera operator. Within a few years, Roizman became a staff cinematographer at MPO Videotronics, Inc., a New York-based commercial house. He shot his first feature several years later. It was never released, but a young director named William Friedkin saw it and asked Roizman if he was ready to shoot a gritty, down-and dirty, documentary-style film called *The French Connection*. That film garnered the first of five Oscar nominations for Roizman. (The others were for *Tootsie*, *Network*, *The Exorcist* and *Wyatt Earp*.) Other memorable films in his body of work include *Three Days of the Condor*, *The Electric Horseman*, *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, *Havana*, *Absence of Malice* and *Taps*.

"I think most people don't understand the artistry that goes into the craft of cinematography," Roizman says. "It is easier to recognize the artistic achievements of directors, writers and actors. So much of what we do is invisible to the audience, because we don't want them to be aware of the camera or lighting we create. This recognition means a lot to me, both personally and because it draws attention to cinematographers in general."

In March, Adam Greenberg received the Visionary Award 2000 at the 16th Israel Film Festival in Los Angeles for the body of work he's compiled in Israel, Western Europe and the United States.

Greenberg was born in Poland just a few years before the outbreak of World War II. When the Russian army occupied part of the country in 1939, they uprooted the Greenberg family and shipped them to a camp in Siberia. He survived that ordeal and migrated to Israel with the remaining members of his family in 1950.

At 17, Greenberg went to work as a timer at a black-and-white motion picture lab. He subsequently switched to shooting newsreel, black-and-white, and documentary films for cinema screens. Greenberg traveled around the world and photographed nearly 120 documentaries before switching to narrative filmmaking in 1964. His credits from that period include *I Love You Rosa*, *House on Shloushe Street*, and *Operation Thunderbolt*, all three of which have been nominated for an Oscar in the best foreign film category.

In 1980, Greenberg migrated to the United States. At first, he mainly worked on low-budget features, though he earned praise for the telefilm *A Woman Called Golda*. Greenberg broke through in 1984 with *The Terminator*, directed by James Cameron. He subsequently earned both Oscar and ASC nominations for his work on *Terminator 2: Judgment Day*. His other U.S. credits include *Three Men and A Baby*, *Ghost* (ASC nomination), *Near Dark*, *La Bamba*, *Sister Act*, *Dave*, *Toys*, *Alien Nation*, *Turner & Hooch*, *Sphere*, *First Knight* and *Rush Hour*.

Greenberg frequently holds lectures for film students in Israel, where he is working to develop a state-of-the-art film center, including a film lab and postproduction facility.

"When I think of how I have been blessed, I feel I have an obligation to give something back by helping the next generation of filmmakers," Greenberg says. "I am both honored and gratified by this recognition from the Israel Film Festival which recognizes both my contributions as a filmmaker and as a teacher."

Daviau Resides at UCLA

Allen Daviau, ASC has been named the Kodak Cinematographer in Residence at the UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television. The residency program was conceived by Prof. William McDonald, vice chair for production. Daviau (*Fearless*, *Bugsy*, *Empire of the Sun*, *E.T.*) will teach a series of classes in the spring quarter that focus on aesthetic and technical issues while he continues to work as a cinematographer.

The Kodak Cinematographer in Residence is a component of UCLA's newly created master of fine arts specialization in cinematography. Says McDonald: "As our society is inundated with images, it becomes more important than ever to develop artists who have a key understanding of the creation of these images. Allen Daviau is one of the most successful and influential cinematographers of our times. He is creating an impressive body of work that is making an indelible impression on young filmmakers. All of our students will benefit from this program."

■

WRAP SHOT

During the race sequence in *Le Mans,* the leading Ferrari 512 explodes after a horrific accident. The fireball distracts Porsche driver Michael Delaney (Steve McQueen) just enough for him to crash moments later, falling victim to the race's most notorious danger — slower traffic. Cinematographers René Guissart Jr. and Robert Hauser, ASC, functioned as European-style "lighting cameramen." Noted Hauser, "I was considered [to be] a technician who doesn't even look through the camera viewfinder."

Steve McQueen's passion for auto racing cost him dearly, ending his marriage, bankrupting his production company and temporarily derailing his acting career. Still, that passion enabled him to capture one of the finest, most realistic depictions of racing on celluloid in the 1971 feature film *Le Mans* (see *AC* Oct. '71), set amid the renowned 24 Hours of Le Mans. Staged annually in France, the famed race is a grueling test of stamina for both car and driver. Though McQueen is given top billing in the film, the obvious stars are the race itself and the beautifully aggressive four-wheeled machines. These selling points are summed up in the movie poster's classic tagline: *Steve McQueen takes you for a drive in the country. The country is France. The drive is at 200 MPH!*

McQueen originally envisioned the racing picture as *Day of the Champion* in 1966 for Warner Bros., and he invested his own money to begin preproduction. However, the project came to a halt when Warner Bros. backed out after being beaten to the finish line by MGM's *Grand Prix,* starring McQueen's Brentwood neighbor, James Garner. To vent his frustration, McQueen reportedly hurled empty beer cans onto Garner's driveway.

By the end of the '60s, McQueen had formed his own production company, Solar Productions, and moved forward with his racing-film obsession by recording 30,000 feet of racing footage from the 1969 Le Mans race. CBS/Cinema Center Films agreed to back the picture, despite the lack of both a script and storyline.

To add to the extraordinary footage already captured, 19 cameras manned by 45 cameramen were positioned around the track for the 1970 race.

The troublesome *Le Mans* script, interwoven with a veiled love story, was thin to say the least — as if racing aficionados really cared. In fact, the first true line of dialogue isn't spoken until nearly 40 minutes into the pseudo-documentary film, and director John Sturges quit because of the narrative weaknesses. (Lee Katzin later took hold of the loose reins.) In fact, the atypical Hollywood script called for driver Michael Delaney, played by McQueen, to steer one of the three famous powder blue-and-orange, 600-horsepower Gulf Oil Porsche 917Ks across the finish line in *second* place, behind his teammate!

The real 1970 race marked Porsche's first Le Mans victory, but only one 917 made it to the end. Therefore, with a big chunk of the film's rapidly swelling budget, another fictional race was staged, complete with a million-dollar stable of manufacturer-donated race cars.

McQueen's bravado dictated that the cars run true to speed, with no camera undercranking, and that he do his own driving — a pastime that his wife, Neile, repeatedly asked him to give up. After watching her husband speed down the Mulsanne straightaway in a 917 at over 200 mph, she walked away, and the marriage collapsed.

The ingenious Gaylin Schultz created mounts that provided novel camera angles. For a remarkable, white-knuckle sequence in which McQueen attempts to fend off his Ferrari rival, Schultz designed front and rear swinging camera mounts for the Porsche. These rigs allowed the Ferrari to bump the camera, causing it to swing away and yet follow the car, without an edit, as it passed by at speeds of 180 m.p.h.

At one point during filming, CCF shut down production for two weeks, and only allowed filming to resume after McQueen agreed to forfeit his salary, all gross profit points and creative control. Nevertheless, an intensely gripping and inventive depiction of the race wound up on the big screen.

Years later, McQueen told a friend, "I laid the whole package on the line for that one — my career, my money, my marriage, even my life. I went all out on *Le Mans.*"

— Douglas Bankston

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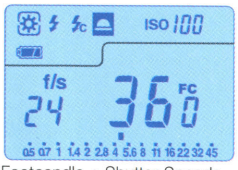

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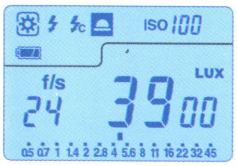

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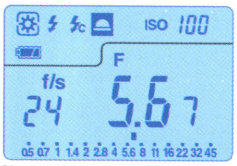

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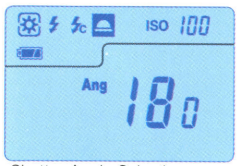

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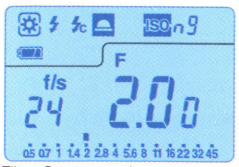

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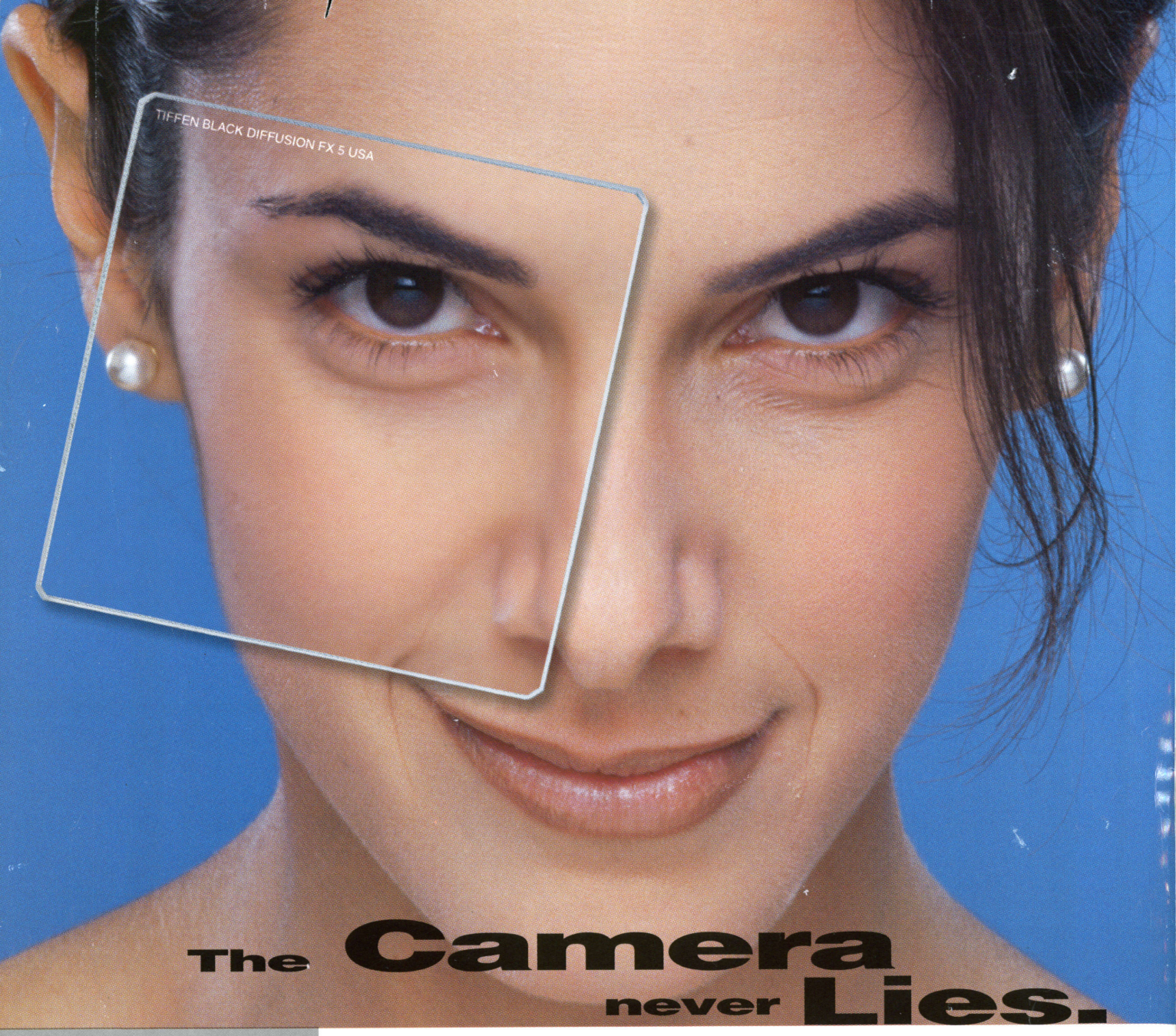

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